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# Lived diversities of conditional citizens: Poles' encounters with difference in Britain

Magda Mogilnicka

University of Bristol

School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies

Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

This thesis explores everyday encounters with difference of post-accession Polish citizens living in Britain. Based on ten months of ethnographic fieldwork combined with in-depth interviews, the research explores the complexities of Poles' everyday practices with cultural others that reflect their understandings of racial, ethnic and religious diversity in the British context. The research aims to offer both methodological and conceptual contributions to the current literature on lived diversities. By applying an original methodological approach of 'go-along' observations, i.e. tracing individuals' practices across various social settings throughout their everyday routines, the research engages with the concepts of everyday cosmopolitanism, conviviality, civility towards difference and everyday racism. The thesis elaborates on these concepts as contradictory practices expressed by the same individuals depending on their social contexts. Thus, it argues that these strategies are what people *do* rather than what they *are*, emphasizing the ambivalent character of everyday negotiations of difference. Moreover, the research situates these complex practices within the broader context of national policies and discourses which construct racial, ethnic and religious difference. By exploring lived diversities through the lens of Poles' status as conditional citizens, this thesis investigates how Polish citizens demonstrate both strategies of inclusion and exclusion in their everyday practices. These, as I argue, represent their ambivalent status which is internalized by Poles who describe themselves as guests in Britain and who negotiate an enhanced status as 'good guests' through practices of stigmatizing others and performing multicultural competence. The research seeks to contribute to the current literature on lived diversities by contextualizing everyday experiences with cultural others within national contexts that construct complex hierarchies of belonging.



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## Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE:.....





## Table of Contents

1 Introduction .....	13
Post-accession migration to Britain .....	14
Research problem .....	19
Thesis overview .....	20
2 Conceptualizing lived diversities .....	23
The emergence of the everyday multiculturalism literature .....	23
The focus on diverse neighbourhoods .....	28
Lived diversities in (super)diverse settings .....	34
A new methodological approach .....	42
Conclusion .....	47
3 Researching lived diversities .....	50
Research questions and epistemological framework .....	50
Recruitment and sample profile .....	52
Data Collection and Analysis .....	55
Reflexive research: managing proximity and distance .....	62
Conclusion .....	65
4 Adam – practices of belonging to the white British majority .....	69
Performing citizenship .....	70
Learning to live with diversity .....	74
Reconciling tensions .....	77
Conclusion .....	79
5 Simon – the absence of ethnic categories in everyday life .....	81
Simon’s migration story .....	82
Lived diversities in a homogenous neighbourhood .....	84
Workplace hierarchies .....	87
Conclusion .....	91
6 Tomek – lived experiences of everyday racism and urban civility .....	92
Encounters with Turkish people at the workplace .....	93
English people are racist .....	97
I’m racist but... ..	99
Conclusion .....	101
7 Kasia – lack of language skills as a barrier in lived diversities .....	103
‘Poles are exploited’- the perceived social status .....	105
The language barrier and living with difference .....	109

Indifference to difference .....	111
Conclusion.....	113
8 Paulina – ambivalent negotiations of class and racial identities .....	114
Not as white? Encounters in white middle-class areas .....	117
Performed cosmopolitanism .....	120
Conditional belonging and racist discourses .....	122
Conclusion.....	124
9 Ewa – perceived integration and ethnic self-segregation .....	126
A contact zone or a comfort zone?.....	129
Urban civility and racialized practices.....	131
Racial displacement .....	134
Conclusion.....	135
10 Marcin – the blend of crude and nuanced forms of racisms.....	137
British citizenship and Polish patriotism.....	139
I think I’m racist.....	141
Civil inattention and avoidance of difference.....	143
Conclusion.....	146
11 Monika – strategies of integration with the British middle class .....	148
The absence of Muslim people in the everyday life .....	149
Tolerance .....	153
Acting middle class.....	155
Conclusion.....	158
12 Daniel – in-between Polish and British hierarchies of belonging .....	160
Conviviality and tensions with other Poles.....	162
Learning British hierarchies of belonging .....	166
Conclusion.....	170
13 Anna – the limits of embraced diversity .....	171
‘Good citizen’ practices.....	173
The relations with Somali residents.....	174
Conclusion.....	180
14 Conditional citizens and everyday lived diversities .....	182
The contradictory practices of living together.....	183
Lived diversities as situated within British hierarchies of belonging.....	190
Conclusion.....	197
15 Conclusions .....	199
Bibliography .....	205





## 1 Introduction

During a visit to London [in early January 2016] I happened to sit next to a Polish man in his late 40s on a train. I overheard his discussion over the phone about a Jewish woman living in Poland who had been approached by a newspaper regarding persecutions of Jewish people by Poles after the war. The topic encouraged me to start a conversation with the man and we talked about the situation of minorities in Poland. He expressed his frustration about Poland not willing to accept any refugees<sup>1</sup>. He claimed that Poland was racist. I then explained briefly that my research was about lived diversities of Polish citizens in Britain. He paused for a few seconds, frowning. Soon after, he made the following comment: 'Recently I had a visit from my friends from Poland. We were on a train and one of them whispered to me: "Look over there, how cool that group is, three women together: one white, one black and one yellow." And I replied: "You see, I don't notice it anymore, I don't see it. For me it's normal"'.

Field notes, January 2016

I mention this episode from my research field notes because it illustrates three issues about everyday lived diversities amongst Poles which I engage with in my thesis. Firstly, the man pointed out a difference between his own view of racial diversity and the perspective of his Polish friends visiting from Poland. His story demonstrates how certain differences, which may be surprising at first encounter, become banal in the process of cohabiting. His claim 'I don't notice it anymore' suggests that he was similarly curious about racial diversity when he first arrived in London, but that it eventually became a 'normal' part of his life, an unnoticed feature in everyday routines. This statement puzzled me, however. What does it mean that racial difference is 'normal'? How 'normal' is it? Does the claimed indifference lead to more meaningful interactions, closer bonds between diverse people? Are these perceptions the same in all social contexts? Considering these questions, the second issue this research is concerned with is when and why certain differences matter and how they are acted upon. Finally, this anecdote demonstrates how two strangers, the man and I, sharing a national identity, linguistically marked boundaries within the social setting of a train.

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<sup>1</sup> This encounter took place during the 'refugee crisis'. Poland's newly elected conservative Law and Justice government had refused to agree to the resettlement project that the European Union had proposed in 2015. While the previous Civic Platform government planned to accept 6,000 Syrians by the end of 2017, the new government suggested accepting only 400 Syrians by the end of 2016, although by May 2016 not even one refugee had been resettled (Pędzwiatr and Legut, 2016).

There we were, surrounded by a diverse crowd of people whose presence we barely acknowledged, talking explicitly about experiences of diversity. No one seemed to understand or show any interest in the foreign-sounding language which marked our difference – it appeared to be an unremarkable event for others, and we did not pay any attention to them either. But, at the same time, the man and I discursively made racial and ethnic differences visible by discussing Jewish minority in Poland, the refugee crisis and the anecdote about his friends’ reaction to the women on a train. The two practices happened simultaneously. Thus, the final point of my research deals with the question of the various strategies of living together, their transience and temporariness, and how they are maintained in everyday lives.

My thesis looks at Poles’ everyday encounters with difference in Britain. In this chapter I outline my approach to researching lived diversities, first explaining why I chose post-accession Polish citizens living in Britain for my study, with a discussion on ethnic diversity in Poland and the context of Polish migration to Britain after the European Union enlargement in 2004. I then move to outlining my research problem, which I situate within the existing literature on everyday multiculturalism. I share this scholarship’s interest in investigating everyday practices in developing academic understandings of diversity. However, I claim that prevalent conceptual and methodological frameworks applied in the everyday multiculturalism literature have led to a bias towards an exploration of mainly positive strategies, which appear to neglect the broader social and political contexts of hierarchies of belonging that persist in societies like Britain. I then set out my own innovative methodological approach to addressing some of the limitations to this literature, which focuses on tracing the everyday encounters with diversity of individuals across different social settings. I argue that this method sheds light on how Poles negotiate their conditional citizenship in Britain. I finish the chapter with the thesis overview.

### Post-accession migration to Britain

The United Kingdom was one of the three EU states (along with Ireland and Sweden) that allowed new EU members (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) to access its labour market<sup>2</sup> following these countries’ EU accession in 2004. The new EU citizens tended to fill gaps for low-skilled labour across a range of sectors, including administration, business and management, hospitality and catering, agriculture, manufacturing and food, fish and meat processing, and public services (Home Office et al., 2006). Poles, coming from the biggest accession state, constituted around 60% of all newcomers (The UK Border Agency,

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<sup>2</sup> With a few restrictions: new immigrants had to register under Working Registration Scheme in Home Office until 2011 unless self-employed (Eade et al. 2007).

2009). High unemployment and low wages in Poland were the main factors motivating Poles to migrate abroad (Drinkwater et al., 2009), and the UK became the most desired destination of the three states, most likely due to the long history of Polish migration to the UK and already established Polish networks and institutions (White, 2010). According to the latest statistics, there are currently<sup>3</sup> over 900,000 Polish immigrants living in the UK, with Polish being the second most spoken language in England and Wales after English (English or Welsh in Wales)<sup>4</sup>. The vast majority are young (18-34 years old) and in employment. Even though they still tend to be employed in low or unskilled labour sectors, despite their higher qualifications from their country of origin, Knight (2014) has observed a trend towards upward social mobility with an improvement of English language skills, growing familiarity with the market as well as with the obtaining of British qualifications.

The large scale of the migration from Poland to Britain has attracted a lot of academic attention, with an established network of collaboration between researchers led by Professor Anne White<sup>5</sup>. There has been extensive work profiling Poles in the UK in terms of their demographics, positions in the labour market, lifestyles, migration strategies, family migration patterns and social networks (for reviews of the literature see White, 2016, Burrell, 2010). However, a focus on their experiences of multicultural Britain and issues of how Poles encounter and respond to ethnic diversity in Britain have received less attention. Earlier studies discussed attitudes to multiculturalism (Eade et al., 2007) and concerns about racism amongst some Poles (Ryan, 2010) but did not explore the topic of negotiating difference in depth. The significance of ethnicity among Poles was comprehensively explored by Michał Garapich, but in terms of intra-ethnic relations between newcomers (Garapich, 2012) and the more established cohorts of Polish migrants who arrived in the UK after the Second World War and in the 1980s, 1990s (Garapich, 2005, Garapich, 2008) – rather than Poles' relations with others. His work emphasized the fragility of ethnic ties and the significance of the political, economic and historical contexts in ethnic boundary construction.

Poles' experiences of diversity have been steadily gaining more attention. Some authors have focused on inter-ethnic tensions in work settings (Cook et al., 2011, McDowell et al., 2007, Parutis, 2011), while others have looked at everyday cosmopolitanism and everyday integration (Datta, 2009, Nowicka, 2010). White et al. (forthcoming) demonstrates how these everyday

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<sup>3</sup> Source: ONS

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/ukpopulationbycountryofbirthandnationality/2016>

<sup>4</sup> Source: ONS

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/articles/languageinenlandandwales/2013-03-04>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/people/anne-white/ssees/research/polish-migration>



cosmopolitanism practices acquired by Poles in Britain shapes a greater acceptance of cultural diversity back in Poland as witnessed in their transnational strategies. Issues of racism are also still under-researched, although they have begun to receive more scholarly interest only recently. Nowicka (2017) explores racism amongst Poles as a transnational phenomenon that is brought from Poland and learnt in the UK, while Fox and Mogilnicka (2017) focused on racist practices as part of everyday integration processes in the British context. Lisiak (2017) explores how racism and Islamophobia intersect with class prejudice and are expressed through everyday performances of Polish femininity and claims that these discourses align Polish women with the white majority in Germany and Britain against Muslim women of colour. The relatively low level of interest in everyday racism is surprising considering the growing body of work on everyday lives and integration processes. The recent doctoral theses of two scholars, Rzepnikowska and Gawlewicz, who focused on encounters with difference amongst Poles, offer the most comprehensive accounts of Poles' everyday encounters with difference and are an important contribution to understanding lived diversities through Poles' lens. Rzepnikowska (2016b, 2017, 2016a) framed lived diversities around the concept of conviviality and compared two contexts: Manchester and Barcelona, while Gawlewicz (2015b, 2015a, 2016a) looked at attitudes towards difference amongst Poles in Leeds and their 'significant others' in Poland and how these influenced one another. Both authors point out the complexities of experienced lived diversities. While they stress both racist and positive interactions with others as part of everyday encounters, they pay less attention to the role of British hierarchies of belonging in constructing Poles' status and affecting their practices with others and understandings of diversity. My interest in studying negotiations of difference amongst Poles is derived from the fact that Poles come from a relatively homogenous society and they occupy an ambivalent racial and socio-economic status in British society. These issues will be discussed next.

### Between East and West

The historical context of Poland's complex relations with other nations has had an important impact on Poles' national identity. In this section I will demonstrate that its relative lack of diversity and its position in-between East and West have shaped Poles' understandings of difference.

Poles coming to Britain often experience racial ethnic and religious diversity for the first time. Poland is a relatively ethnically homogenous country with 'ethno-national' minorities constituting only 5% of the population, whilst 88% of the nation declare themselves to be Catholic (GUS, 2015). The lack of diversity has its roots in Polish modern history. Before the Second World War, ethnic minorities constituted one third of the Polish population (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Okólski, 2003: 24), with almost 10% of the nation being Jewish in the 1930s (Eberhardt, 2013). However, as a result of the atrocities of the Holocaust and the persecution and extradition of Jewish people during

the post-war period of socialism, the number of Jewish people in Poland has decreased over the years, with only 8,000 people declaring themselves as belonging to the Jewish minority in 2011 (GUS, 2015). Foreigners (mostly from Vietnam, Armenia, Turkey and China) constitute 0.2% of the total population with a significant number based in the capital city, Warsaw, where 1.3% of foreign inhabitants reside (Piekut et al., 2012: 2992). The population of black people is estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000 in a country of almost 38 million inhabitants (Nowicka, 2017: 4).

With no history of modern colonialism, Poland has never experienced a large influx of migrants from former colonies. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to the large wave of migrants from former colonies, successive British governments introduced implicitly racist immigration policies (Solomos, 2003, Somerville, 2007), while Poland remained behind the Iron curtain under 'Soviet imperialism' (Mayblin et al., 2016a: 61) with its doors closed to Western influences. Nevertheless, blackness is still a visible category, symbolically constructed in Poland through Western colonial discourses. Colonial influences are traced in popular culture from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most famous poem 'Murzynek Bambo' (Bambo the little black/Negro boy) by Julian Tuwim and Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel 'In desert and wilderness' reinforce colonial discourses of Africa and African people as uncivilized, uneducated and inferior (Ząbek, 2007, Moskalewicz, 2005). These are still considered as classic literature for children. The backwardness of black people was further established by more recent books by Kapuscinski, an internationally reputed war reporter whose stories about violent conflicts in Africa in the 1960s onwards reinforced the idea of Africa being troubled by poverty, crime and chaos (Ząbek, 2007).

Mayblin et al. (2016a) claimed that three aspects of Poland's relation with other nations marked Poland's understandings of difference. The first one is status as a coloniser when Poland conquered Eastern regions in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. These events shaped Poland's superior attitude towards its Eastern neighbours (Belarus and Ukraine), which are still perceived as less civilized, poorer and inferior compared to Poland (Zarycki, 2010). The second was its experiences of oppression, first experienced during partitions between 1775-1918, when Poland was divided between the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Monarchy and disappeared from the political map, and then by Soviet Union in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Janion (2011), postcolonial theory helps to question the East/West dichotomy that reproduces power relations between the supposedly superior West and inferior East by looking at Poland as a hybrid space with transgressive boundaries of difference (Bhabha, 2004). Marciniak (2009) further suggested analysing Poland as a third space, post-socialist hybridity of both West and East influences. On the one hand, Poland's experience of being oppressed creates an understanding of post-colonial oppressed nations (Cavanagh, 2004), on the other, they developed an inferiority complex towards

democratic Western societies, which are romanticized by Poles as superior, more civilized and economically and culturally progressive (Horolets and Kozłowska, 2012, Janion, 2011, Thompson, 2010, Kania, 2009). Poland's desire to catch up with Western democratic and liberal societies shapes Poles' 'in-between' identity.

The ambivalent position of Poland as 'not-quite-Western and not-quite-Eastern' (Owczarzak, 2009: 11) is further reinforced by Poles' socio-economic status in Britain as 'not-quite-white', low-skilled economic migrants. Their racial, classed and national identities are being reconstructed in this new political context that marks them as contingently different.

### The ambivalent status of Polish people in Britain

When Poles arrive in Britain they find their national identity challenged as they 'become Polish' (Ryan, 2010) in the process of (re)negotiating their national identity within a multicultural society of settlement. On the one hand, the freedom to work granted through EU accession in 2004 implicitly contributed to 'whitewashing' Britain (McDowell, 2009) by filling the gap in the labour market with white EU members from Central and Eastern Europe. This, as some authors have claimed (Fox et al., 2012, McDowell, 2009), was a continuation of the implicitly racist migration policies that started in the 1960s with the restrictions imposed on migrants from Commonwealth countries. On the other hand, Poles' whiteness is putative, i.e. they can be racialized as the undesirable Other through hostile media and political debates (Spigelman, 2013). Even when Poles are praised for their work ethos, these positive stereotypes are accompanied by negative discourses criticizing liberal immigration policies as too liberal in allowing the entry of Poles into the UK (Fomina and Frelak, 2008). Thus, whiteness becomes ambivalent and Poles become 'in-between people' (Barrett and Roediger, 1997).

The term 'in-between' was first introduced by Barrett and Roediger who investigated the history of racialization of white European immigrants in the United States in the 19th and 20th century (Barrett and Roediger, 1997), and demonstrated the ways in which migrants were treated as different 'races', believed to be culturally different to the majority and biologically predisposed to certain types of labour (Barrett and Roediger 1997: 17). As a consequence of racialization, European immigrants were discriminated against in the labour market, received lower wages than American workers and lived in poverty. They were 'in-between' – not black but not white enough. However, newcomers, in the quest to improve their status and join the mainstream white society, reproduced dominant racist practices against black people by supporting slavery (Ignatiev, 1995), taking part in riots against black workers (Barrett and Roediger, 1997, Guglielmo and Salerno, 2003, Ignatiev, 1995), and joining political parties and trade unions which aimed to exclude non-white workers.

This helped them achieve 'an American standard of living' (Barrett, 1992: 1009) and 'become white' (Ignatiev, 1995). Similarly, in the British context, certain white European immigrants, i.e. Irish, East European and Jewish, were racialized in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bonnett, 2000, Garner, 2007, Kushner, 2005) and, as some authors argue (Fox et al., 2012, Ryan, 2007), they still are.

Poles' ambivalent status should be situated within the broader context of the (anti)migration discourses that have constructed their stigmatized identity in Britain. Despite being marginalized in the labour market, they are perceived as less desirable rather than undesirable due to their legal status and whiteness. Thus, they try to reconcile their lower status by claims of belonging on the grounds of being white, Christian and European (Parutis, 2011). In my research I consider the impact of Poles' intersecting identities of whiteness, Christianity, Europeaness and Polishness on their everyday lived diversities.

### Research problem

I am interested in exploring how the ambivalent position of Poles in Britain plays out in their everyday experiences of diversity. This ambivalence emerges as Poles enter the British context with certain ideas about race, ethnicity and religion, encountering difference hardly ever experienced in Poland. It thus requires consideration of this background context of relatively low levels of diversity in Poland. Furthermore, this relates to Poland's complex, historically shaped relations with other countries, which has impacted Polish national identity in its construction as in-between East and West. Hence, Poles' actual experiences with newly encountered ethnic, racial and religious others verify their previously learnt perceptions and situate them within the 'new hierarchies of belonging' (Back et al., 2012) in Britain. But these are also formed through their personal biographies, previous experiences with difference either in Poland or abroad and educational background.

Taking into account the Polish context, I focus my research on exploring how Poles learn to live with diversity through everyday practices in their new socio-cultural context. I contribute to the literature on everyday lived diversities that is critical of top-down approaches, instead drawing attention to lived experiences and everyday interactions with cultural others. I share the everyday multiculturalism scholars' view that it is important to look at everyday experiences in order to understand lived diversities in current Western multicultural societies. Many of them (Neal et al., 2013, Noble, 2009, Wessendorf, 2013, Wise, 2006) argue that macro approaches, such as multiculturalism, are insufficient in addressing the complexities of diversification of Western societies shaped by more recent global migration movements, a phenomenon termed by Vertovec (2007) as 'super-diversity'. He argued that there is a need to look beyond ethnic, religious and racial categories and to consider other patterns of differentiation such as language, legal status, channels

of entry etc. that shape people's lives more than the 'old' categories of difference that macro theories of multiculturalism are preoccupied with (Vertovec, 2007). Some of the most prominent scholars driving the everyday multiculturalism literature and employing the super-diversity concept, such as Amanda Wise (2006, 2009, 2013) and Susanne Wessendorf (2014b), draw our attention to everyday practices of co-existing and being together. Other scholars have developed these concepts by exploring positive strategies of living together in neighbourhoods specific diverse settings, such as parks, cafés and shopping malls in which people gather together and negotiate peaceful co-presence (Jones et al., 2015, Neal et al., 2015, Radice, 2016, Watson, 2009a, Wilson, 2011). The important contribution of this literature is that it provides evidence that people tend to get along in their everyday lives and that racial, ethnic or religious difference are often unimportant in the forming of social relations. These claims challenge public discourses of segregated lives that have featured prominently in media, political and academic debates. However, they have been criticized for offering descriptive accounts of everyday inter-cultural exchanges with little elaboration of inequalities embedded in everyday practices. Focusing on everyday multiculturalism as an achievement, without necessarily wishing to do so, neglects racism.

With this research I attempt to contribute to the literature on everyday diversities by exploring everyday practices through the lens of the status of Poles in Britain. In conceptualizing everyday negotiations with difference as representing the ambivalent status of individuals, I situate everyday experiences with diversity within the larger discourses of the notions of citizenship, belonging, and the politics of migration in the British context. I do this by approaching everyday experiences with difference not within spatially bounded contexts, such as neighbourhoods or specific (semi)public spaces, but by tracking people *across* settings and exploring their understandings within specific social contexts. To do this I have developed a novel methodological approach: a series of ethnographic 'go-along' observations of individuals. I argue that it is through tracing everyday encounters with diversity across different spaces that we can understand the dynamics between conviviality, racism, and indifference, i.e. the various strategies of negotiating difference in everyday routines. My case studies, focused on ten individuals, shed light on how Poles negotiate their ambivalent status in Britain by addressing the broader context of how national hierarchies of belonging are entrenched and negotiated. Thus, I make both methodological and conceptual contributions to the literature on everyday lived diversities and claim that lived diversities of Poles should be understood through their ambivalent status as conditional citizens.

## Thesis overview

The next chapter offers a review of the literature on everyday lived diversities. I first discuss the context in which this scholarship emerged and then elaborate on its importance in the academic

debates concerning living with difference. I evaluate the literature's focus on spatial contexts and the various types of interactions, i.e. conviviality, cosmopolitanism and indifference, observed by scholars within these settings. I also examine the literature's contributions to challenging the popular discourses on ethnic segregation and discuss some of the shortcomings of the conceptual and methodological frameworks, which tend to side-line issues of racism. I argue that the literature discusses everyday lived diversities as cultural exchanges in descriptive ways, paying little attention to the broader political dimension of diversity as reinforcing inequalities. I discuss my approach to researching lived diversities and explain my conceptual framework, drawing on Bridget Anderson's (2013) concept of community of value, and her typology of citizens. I also provide a justification for the chosen methodology and set out the innovative method I developed to capture complex negotiations of difference in various social settings.

In Chapter Three I move on to explaining in more detail my methodological approach. The chapter elaborates on my research questions and epistemological framework and offers a detailed description of my data collection methods. I explain the practical steps I took in conducting the series of 'go-along' observations, interviews and the process of analysing the data. I also evaluate on the challenges of accessing my participants and the obstacles I faced during the fieldwork process. I finish with ethical considerations I dealt with and how applying a reflexive approach throughout the research process was needed to address these.

The following chapters (four to thirteen) are my empirical chapters which I organized by discussing each of my ten participants individually. This decision was made during the data analysis process, when I realised that grouping together individuals' experiences would risk losing the meaning of the context of their practices. In order to show the value of my approach and the richness of my data I organized the chapters based on each participant. I look at vignettes, stories as well as interviews and provide rich accounts of experiences of their lived diversities. The chapters also reflect on what these experiences tell us about belonging and identity.

Chapter fifteen offers a summary of the key findings analysed in my ten empirical chapters and provides general arguments with which I contribute to the literature on everyday diversities. I identify the main themes threading across each participants' lived experiences and discuss them within the broader national context. I claim that the various strategies of living together are contextual, fragile and contradictory practices that change depending on social settings. The inconsistent ways of engaging with ethnic, racial and religious others are driven by the broader context that constructs national hierarchies of belonging. Poles' perceptions and direct encounters

are shaped by their conditional citizenship, i.e. the ambivalent racial and socio-economic status in British society that they constantly need to maintain in order to feel accepted by the majority.

## 2 Conceptualizing lived diversities

In recent years there has been a shift in the academic literature on diversity from a focus on macro-theories to micro-approaches. In this chapter I explore the contributions of the existing literature on everyday lived diversities and discuss how they can be applied to my case study. I elaborate on their conceptualizations of living with difference and how these provide a context to my research question. I first explore the background to the recent interest in 'everyday multiculturalism', pointing out the theoretical and political contexts in which the literature on everyday multiculturalism has emerged. I then provide an overview of the scholarship, categorizing it into two types, one focusing on diverse neighbourhoods and the other on specific social settings, such as workplaces, cafes, parks, shopping malls. Both stress the role of spatial contexts and approach lived diversities as situated within specific diverse streetscapes, drawing on conceptual frameworks of super-diversity, contact zones and conviviality. I then argue that some scholarship tends to valorize living together in diverse Western societies as successful and emphasizes the positive aspects of lived diversities with less attention paid to racialized practices and everyday racism. This, I claim, risks hindering the complexities of lived diversities.

I move on to proposing my own methodical and conceptual approach which I believe addresses the discussed limitations. Rather than focusing on a diverse spatial context, I suggest that everyday lived diversities can be explored via participant observation of individuals and their various practices with others, observed by following them throughout their everyday routines as they move through different social and spatial contexts. The proposed method allows for the investigation of the social contexts of encounters beyond the spatial one, by acknowledging people's personal biographies, narratives as well as their socio-economic statuses in shaping their understandings of diversity. Moreover, I suggest the need to connect the individual experiences with structural dimensions by conceptualizing them as situated within British hierarchies of belonging. This is justified in the final section of the chapter elaborating on the conceptual tools driving my research questions.

### The emergence of the everyday multiculturalism literature

Stuart Hall identified 'the capacity to live with difference' as one of the greatest challenges that Britain faced as a consequence of globalization processes, arguing that it was 'the coming question of the twenty-first century' as Britain became increasingly culturally diverse while striving for ethnic homogeneity (Hall, 1993: 361). Rapid demographic changes in the population as a consequence of global migration resulted in a process of a 'multicultural drift', i.e. the '... increasing involvement of Britain's black and brown populations visibly registering a play of difference right across the face of



British society' (Hall, 2000: 1). Nevertheless, the stronger presence of ethnic and racial minorities in the British national 'project' was occurring simultaneously with the rejection of difference expressed in the proliferation of fears against migrants, growing xenophobia, and support for right wing nationalist political movements.

Conceptualising difference is contingent upon historical, political and social contexts and has been approached by scholars from various angles, exploring racial, ethnic or religious diversity. The twentieth century was about the colour line as Du Bois claimed (Du Bois, 1994 [1903]). The legacy of slavery, colonialism and biological racism has caused the long-lasting suppression of black people in Western countries. The literature focused on the processes of marginalisation of people of colour in modern Western societies, where even though biological racism had been largely rejected, racial divisions and the continued oppression on the grounds of cultural differences remained. The shift in the British public discourses towards 'ethnic' minorities and *their* cultures still manifested the difference in racial terms towards people of colour. In the British context, their 'problematic' presence was marked by the arrival in 1948 of the SS Empire Windrush, with over 400 migrants from the Caribbean, and continued throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s with the growing migration of visibly different citizens from the former colonies, perceived as an economic and cultural threat to the white British majority population (Solomos, 2003). Even though 'race' was accepted to be a social construct rather than a biological trait, this did not eliminate the existence of racism but disguised it in the form of concerns about, and strategies of protection of, 'our' ways of life, against the supposedly negative influence of migrants and their inherently different cultures, illustrated in Enoch Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech<sup>6</sup>. These less explicit forms of exclusion were conceptualized as 'new racism' (Barker, 1981) or as Balibar (1991: 21) described it 'racism without races' directed at cultural differences rather than emphasizing white superiority. Hence, cultural differences were reinforced and ethnicity, even though as socially constructed as 'race', was believed to be a 'real' thing, a self-ascription to a group with which people feel affinity due to a common heritage (Weber, 1978). The scholarship responded to these shifts in the processes of racialization by exploring the structural and ideological processes of suppression of black minorities and migrants and sought to explain the ways in which 'race', officially rejected as a biologically determined trait, was still a powerful category used to construct hierarchies. Thus,

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<sup>6</sup>In his speech in 1968 Powell suggested inherent differences between white British people and racial and religious minorities of colour and voiced his concerns about 'English men' becoming 'strangers in their own country'. He suggested harder immigration controls as well as repatriations of already settled migrants (available online: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3643823/Enoch-Powells-Rivers-of-Blood-speech.html>)

some authors investigated discrimination of people of colour in housing, employment, and education and elaborated on structural conditions shaping race relations (Rex, 1983, Rex and Tomlinson, 1979). Furthermore, the edited collection *The Empire Strikes Back* (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982) pointed at the reproduction of racist ideology through politics of racism that constructed 'race' in both social and political terms. Hence, the academic debates from the 1950s onwards focused on both ideological and structural strategies of exclusion and marginalization of migrants of colour, pointing out the systematic discrimination they had been experiencing (Back and Solomos, 2009), an issue still unresolved in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Gilroy, 2004).

One of the responses to this structural marginalisation was multiculturalism, a political theory of politically managing ethnic and cultural difference, which offered an integration model for South Asian and Caribbean minorities, focussing on the public recognition and protection of religious and ethnic identities (Modood, 2007, Parekh, 2000). The demands of theories of multiculturalism were for minorities to be recognized in the public and political sphere and a number of policies followed as a result, such as the provision of halal meals at school, the institutional recognition of and engagement with Muslim civil society organisations, the creation of a legal exemption to allow Sikhs to wear a turban instead of a motor-cycle helmet to name a few (Modood, 2016). Multiculturalism influenced British policies of integration in the 1990s and early 2000s, driving political discourses, policies and academic debates about diversity. However, it was met with a backlash following the 2001 riots in Oldham, Burnley, and Bradford, 9/11, and the terrorist attack in 2005 in London (Amin, 2002, Kundnani, 2001). Islam has been constructed as a trait of the 'oriental other', portrayed as a religion of violence and a threat to the Western order (Khalid, 2011, Kumar, 2012). British media and politicians proclaimed that multiculturalism was dead (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010a), accusing minorities, mainly of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origins, of causing tensions and being supposedly unwilling to integrate. The politics of multiculturalism were blamed for contributing to the processes of deepening segregation between British and particularly Muslim communities. The policies of recognition in Western liberal democracies have become widely characterised in pejorative terms (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010a).

As a consequence of ongoing criticisms of multiculturalism, there has been a growing reluctance to use the term and an alternative theory, interculturalism, was introduced to characterise policies of politically managing ethnic and cultural difference (Cantle, 2012). In Britain the approach was introduced by Ted Cantle, whose report claimed that 'white and Asian communities' live 'parallel lives' and rarely come to contact with one another (Home Office, 2001). Finney and Simpson (2009) argued that the report contributed to negative public discourses associating ethnic diversity in England with segregation and community tensions. Thus, neither multiculturalism nor

interculturalism were satisfactory frameworks for researchers interested in everyday experiences of living together since both approaches offer only a macro-perspective. In response to the Cattle report's claims, the scholarship on everyday negotiations of difference attempted to challenge discourses that racialize social problems, such as the perceived lack of social integration and isolation amongst minorities. Instead, it pointed to the ways in which individuals reached out across perceived differences in their everyday practices and expressed complex identities that belied the fixed ethnicities demonised in public rhetoric. By demonstrating people's ability to live harmoniously regardless of ethnic differences, the scholarship on everyday diversity in English cities argued that individuals in diverse settings could and did develop positive relations and tended to co-exist peacefully with one another – regardless of ethnic and cultural differences (Amin, 2002, Gidley, 2013, Neal et al., 2013, Watson, 2006, Wessendorf, 2014b). The public discourses claiming the death of multiculturalism were also challenged in other, notably European and Australian, contexts (Noble, 2009, Noble, 2013, Wise, 2006, Peters and de Haan, 2011, Blommaert, 2013).

These findings were achieved by adopting bottom-up approaches to studying societies that explored everyday interactions, without relying on interculturalism or multiculturalism theories. Instead, the term super-diversity has resonated with and been used by a wide range of empirical studies. It was first introduced by Vertovec (2007) to describe the complexity of the diversification of Western societies, which he had examined by looking at changes in London's population as a result of globalization processes since the 1990s. Vertovec was also critical of multiculturalism, however of its policies rather than theoretical underpinnings, which made super-diversity a weak conceptual tool, but a useful term describing complex demographic and social changes. Vertovec claimed that current multicultural policies in Britain did not reflect the scale of diversity and addressed only certain groups, i.e. the post-immigration minorities from African, Caribbean and South Asian former colonies, aiming at recognizing the rights of those discriminated and stigmatized groups. He pointed out that migration patterns had become more complex than the immigration processes of the 1960s and 1970s. In the era of globalization, the flow of migrants is unpredictable and less stable. Migrants' entitlements vary depending on their legal status, migration channels, access to employment, or country of origin. Yet, Vertovec claimed, policies do not deal with these current rapid changes and are not directed at newcomers who have no links with settled minorities or colonial connections with Britain. Indeed, the phenomenon Vertovec describes has been recognized by multicultural theorists, who agreed that multiculturalism needs to be updated as a political thought and adjusted to the changes brought by recent patterns of migration, i.e. instability, temporariness and diversity, so that it recognizes and protects the rights of new, less established cohorts of migrants (Kymlicka, 2015, Modood, 2016).

In emphasising the complexities of identities, super-diversity does not address issues of racism, and Vertovec makes only one brief mention of it in his article, as Back and Sinha note (2016). While the framework of super-diversity allows the elaboration of complex identities in an increasingly diversified society, the scholarship on everyday multiculturalism that draws on the term rarely engages with categories of difference marked by oppression, the central matters of the political theory of multiculturalism. My concern with this scholarship lies in its shift away from ethnicity and 'race' towards cultural identities, negotiated through everyday interactions. The focus on inter-cultural practices in super-diverse societies was described by Valluvan as a form of 'descriptive naivety' (2016: 2) because it does not address issues of racism and fails to engage with normative theories of integration. Furthermore, approaching lived diversities as individualized micro-interactions, without acknowledging the historical contexts that reproduce racialised hierarchies, risks depoliticising diversity (Sealy, 2017: 12), a strategy that moves away from issues of discrimination and social justice.

Despite these shortcomings, super-diversity has been widely used since it was first introduced in 2007. As Vertovec (2013) later stated, the term had been cited in over 300 articles from a range of disciplines such as migration studies, urban geography, linguistics, social policy or social work in a number of developed and developing countries, with a strong influence of the everyday multiculturalism literature. Although Meissner and Vertovec (2015: 542) recognized that the term 'remains a conceptual work in progress', more recently Vertovec (2017) has reinforced the argument that the popularity of 'super-diversity' in the literature demonstrates the need to reconceptualise the increasingly complex migration patterns and social developments of living with difference in contemporary Western societies that theories so far have not been able to capture. While I acknowledge the necessity for re-thinking modes of togetherness in multicultural societies, I argue that the shift in the literature on everyday diversities towards cultural practices in super-diverse contexts omits, perhaps unintentionally, racialized practices and the broader context of hierarchies of belonging that shape everyday understandings of diversity. As I will argue throughout this chapter, the lack of engagement with structural processes has had consequences for the recent literature's conceptualisation of living with difference that is portrayed in an overwhelmingly positive way.

In summary, the micro 'from below' accounts aim to, on the one hand, challenge the multicultural policies by showing that 'traditional' understandings of difference in ethnic or religious categories do not reflect the actual complexities of identities expressed in everyday life. On the other, prove that multiculturalism is not dead since ordinary people are able to overcome perceived cultural differences through their everyday practices of living together. The recent attempts to address

diversity from a new angle has resulted in a rich account of studies with a focus on everyday multiculturalism, i.e. 'a grounded approach to looking at the *everyday practice* and lived experience of diversity in specific situations and spaces of encounter. It explores how social actors experience and negotiate cultural difference on the ground and how their social relations and identities are shaped and re-shaped in the process' (Wise and Velayutham, 2009, p.3). Methodologically, the spatial contexts in which learning to live with difference occurs is emphasized in the studies of everyday multiculturalism. I will discuss their contributions by grouping them into two main spatial categories through which living together is addressed: the diverse neighbourhood lens and, more prevalently, the role of more specific spatial settings, such as parks, shops, workplaces. Since not all scholars engage explicitly with the concept of super-diversity, I will use '(super)diverse' when referring to settings described in the literature as either diverse or super-diverse.

### The focus on diverse neighbourhoods

Diverse neighbourhoods are often highly stigmatized in popular discourses, ghettoized and represented as dangerous, self-segregated and 'foreign' (Husband et al., 2014: 53, Finney and Simpson, 2009: 116-137, Slater and Anderson, 2012). Minorities of colour are seen as having inherently different cultures and unwilling to integrate with the rest of the society (Alexander, 2000, Alexander et al., 2007).

An investigation into everyday lives in diverse neighbourhoods is not new. In the British context ethnographic studies emerged in response to multiculturalism theory in the 1990s and early 2000s, with the focus on complexities of everyday negotiations of racial and ethnic identities amongst young people living in multi-ethnic, socially and economically deprived areas (Alexander, 1996, Alexander, 2000, Back, 1996, Baumann, 1996). The appeal of ethnographic studies on diverse neighbourhoods is understandable. Thorough and systematic research challenges urban myths racializing diverse geographies and marginalized ethnic groups. The studies investigated the complexities of young residents' everyday lives and how their understandings of 'race' and culture translated into their practices with others, unravelling multidimensional processes of reproducing and resisting racism in everyday lives.

Recent ethnographic research continues the tradition of exploring everyday practices, challenging macro-theories of multiculturalism or interculturalism and negative discourses, although the current focus is not necessarily on established minorities as in the case of the earlier work but also on practices between new cohorts of migrants (Wise, 2006, Wessendorf, 2014b, Husband et al., 2014, Gidley, 2013, Blommaert, 2013, Wise and Velayutham, 2014). Overall, the emphasis of these studies is on how people of various backgrounds manage to live together successfully, while they

engage with issues of tensions to different extents (discussed below). However, as I will argue in this section the focus on collaboration suggests a normative bias in the literature since living with diversity is perceived as an achievement. The cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhoods is highlighted and ambivalent practices, explored by earlier ethnographers, are rarely elaborated on (with exception of Husband et al., 2014). I discuss the literature by looking at two themes emerging from it: a sense of belonging and indifference to difference.

### A sense of belonging

The earlier ethnographic studies highlighted the strong attachment of young residents to the diverse areas in which they lived. Back (1996: 55) described the sense of belonging as 'neighbourhood nationalism', i.e. the emphasis young white people living in diverse areas placed on sameness due to shared space and a perceived common culture. However, focusing on racialized inequalities and racism, Back stressed that this feeling of belonging to a local community does not necessarily reduce everyday racism. In fact, the claims of neighbourhood nationalism were made while denying that racial difference was a divisive category in white youth's daily practices with their black peers.

The recent literature on (super)diverse neighbourhoods also reinforces the idea that residents express a sense of belonging to a local community and point out the strategies through which sameness and inclusiveness are constructed amongst a culturally and ethnically diversified population. Watson and Saha (2013) emphasized that the family kinship and locally grounded friendship networks enhance the emotional attachment to neighbourhoods. Wessendorf (2017: 4) stressed the psycho-social advantages for some migrants of 'not sticking out' in diverse areas and fear of racism in more homogenous neighbourhoods for others as contributing to the feeling of belonging (also noted by Husband et al. 2014). This sense of attachment may result from the limited mobility of residents who rarely leave their neighbourhoods (Gidley, 2013, Wise, 2009, Wise, 2006) and express a strong affiliation with those geographically bounded spaces.

The emotional bond with neighbourhoods is discussed by some scholars in terms of practices building the sense of belonging. Wise argued that 'hopeful intercultural encounters' (Wise, 2006: 171) such as gift exchanges, acts of reciprocity, watering plants on communal corridors and exchanging food contribute to building a neighbourly community. These small acts of kindness and care for community help develop solidarity and connectedness between diverse residents. Thus, people who are less mobile make every effort to build their lives around the neighbourhood community. The loyalty to a neighbourhood may be demonstrated by following unofficial codes of practice which residents are expected to follow. The empirical work of Wessendorf (2014) and

Husband et al. (2014) on lived diversities in diverse neighbourhoods in Britain unravelled normative codes of behaviour established and maintained by their residents. People's everyday interactions happen within shared norms of the neighbourhood, expressed as either expectations that residents should engage in the neighbourhood's communal practices (Wessendorf, 2014: 102-120) or by following a certain dress code (Husband et al., 2014 126-127).

Another approach to exploring strategies of successful co-existence emphasizes the infrastructure of neighbourhoods, such as the design of houses or the streetscape of diverse neighbourhoods, as contributing to the sense of collectivity. For example, Husband et al. provide a detailed description of Manningham's physical environment, a neighbourhood in Bradford which has a high population of Muslims and which '...has acquired in some quarters an entrenched reputation as a problematic multi-ethnic inner-city area' (2014: 7). They show how the residents express pride in their area and take care of it. Contrary to its ghettoized reputation, residents pay attention to the aesthetics of their neighbourhood. They create a sense of community by looking after their houses and front gardens and by maintaining the streets, local parks and playgrounds, keeping them clean and tidy. Moreover, the authors point out how diversity is embedded and reproduced in Manningham through signage incorporating various cultures and ethnicities. This can be seen in the presence of many international restaurants and 'ethnic foodstuffs' (2014: 42) in local shops, the co-existence of different places of worship, as well as window displays or shop signs in different languages, revealing the ethnicity of owners. Therefore, the multicultural population is symbolically represented in the architecture and infrastructure, communicating the cosmopolitan character of the place. The tidy and vibrant physical landscape of a diverse neighbourhood in Bradford perceived by outsiders as dangerous and deprived, is, the authors argue, appreciated by its residents as it creates a feeling of comfort, safety and belonging to a community.

A similar point about the inclusiveness of various cultures in the infrastructure of a diverse area was made by Blommaert (2014), who found that residents of a diverse inner-city neighbourhood in Antwerp in Belgium, had created an 'oecumenical' version of the official language, which may not be grammatically correct because it is used by migrants but is a sufficient medium of communication between minorities who use it as a secondary language. Such linguistically, ethnically and culturally diverse streetscapes symbolised in language and signage, demonstrate, according to the authors, the occurrence of processes of inclusion and mutual recognition of minorities on a micro level. Similarly, Wise & Velayutham (2014) stressed the importance of the design of spaces in nurturing living together. Thus, social housing in certain areas in Singapore has been designed so that open corridors connecting flats in buildings force neighbours of various ethnic backgrounds to initiate contact and get to know one another by exchanging greetings or

casual chats. As they argued, even the smell of neighbours' cooking creates a sense of familiarity with peoples' habits and rituals, and, therefore, can encourage conviviality. The authors conclude that the architecture and infrastructure of the neighbourhoods embody a 'spatial ordering' (2014: 410), creating conditions that enhance living together in a multi-ethnic environment.

The literature seems to emphasize a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood that bonds residents beyond ethnic or racial affiliations and is based on shared space and practices. As Husband et al (2014: 169) summarised: '[t]he overwhelming sameness of needs and aspirations, and a sense of the specific identity of the area that they share facilitate an intercultural competence that enables them to effectively rub along together.' However, by focusing on feelings of belonging, neighbourhoods risk being portrayed as bounded communities of individuals who are willing to contribute to community life and be seen as part of it. Whilst it is important to stress the conscious efforts of some individuals to create cross-cultural bridges to improve residents' relations (Noble, 2009, Wise, 2009), it is crucial to acknowledge that others may not treat their neighbourhood as their community. Back (2009: 204) pointed out that migrants may feel isolated from their local area due to fear of racism, while connecting globally with their families in their countries of origin through the phone or internet. Even Husband et al. (2014: 127-134) recognized that some residents of Manningham distanced themselves discursively and considered relocating from the neighbourhood due to its negative reputation. While community life may be significant for young and elderly residents, whose lives are built around their neighbourhoods, for an increasingly mobile and transnational population the affinity with neighbourhoods may be of less importance.

The various ways of engagement with neighbourhoods suggest that a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood is not straightforward. The normative assumption that residents should be mixing risks valorising neighbourhoods as spaces of connection and solidarity. As I will argue below, the focus of some literature on the 'ethos of mixing' (Wessendorf, 2013) and strategies of peaceful co-existence, portrays diverse neighbourhoods as successful communities.

### Indifference to difference

The notion of an urban attitude of indifference to difference comes from the work of urban theorists who explored the issue of living together successfully in urban spaces as early as the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Simmel's concept of a 'blasé attitude' (Simmel, 2002 [1903]) defines civility as an apparent indifference towards other people, that hides the inner tensions prompted by the complexities of urban life. The fast pace of the city, the evanescence of social relations, the intensity of masses of people encountered in everyday life inevitably cause anxieties which are then overcome by reciprocal indifference of strangers towards each other. This was developed recently



by Tonkiss (2006: 22-24) who, applying her analysis to contemporary diverse cities, conceptualised a prevalent ethical strategy in daily routines in public places where cultural diversity is negotiated as an 'ethic of indifference'. Thus, this shifted the reason for indifference away from how the individual manages a metropolitan environment in which they can be overwhelmed to a more conscious sense of respect and connection to others. Similar point about ethics in cities was made by Goffman, who conceptualised behaviour in public spaces as civil inattention, an expression of respect towards sharing space with others, shown by active avoidance and based on an unspoken ethical requirement (Goffman, 1971b: 385). Hence, people avoid staring at one another and act with indifference in public spaces in order to respect one another's right to privacy (Goffman, 1966: 86-87). To avoid tensions and to express general acceptance of others, people '...will act in a civil manner' (Lofland, 1989: 464) towards individuals who are different and of whom they have little knowledge or curiosity about. Social distance is prevalent in shared urban spaces and creates a necessary disconnection that maintains a civic culture of mutual respect and acceptance. This is not to say, however, that 'civility towards diversity' can be described as positive interaction. The appropriateness of indifferent behaviour is not expressed by being nice to each other but by lack of public judgment, even towards those who we may hold prejudices against (Lofland, 1989).

Some authors investigating civil inattention elaborate on the relationship between spatial context of public spaces and individuals' behaviour. Amin (2008: 11) argued that spatial arrangements of public spaces, such as streets, markets or parks, help shape non-hierarchical relations and therefore, encourage practices of civility. Indeed, Bauman (2003) and Sennett (2000) shared concerns about the erosion of the public life and the decrease of public spaces in modern cities. As a result, people retreat to the private sphere, having fewer chances for spontaneous encounters with difference. This increases distrust towards unfamiliar others that in turn creates divisions. Similarly, Watson stressed the need for the existence of public spaces in diverse societies because they provide people with the opportunity to rub along in an ordinary fashion that diminishes difference. As she said, they are 'site[s] of potentiality, difference and delightful encounters' (2006: 19). Thus, public spaces provide an opportunity to encounter the Other and are an important part of urban life that enhance familiarity and nurture the skills that enable us to live with difference. Urban civility, as superficial as it may appear, is an important part of the everyday practices that create a social order and help avoid vocalizing conflict through reciprocal non-engagement.

As explored by the neighbourhood studies on lived diversities, these civilities of indifference to difference are also expressed in highly diverse urban neighbourhoods. Wessendorf (2014b: 65) described this as cosmopolitan pragmatism, i.e. '...in order to get around, get help to get on a bus, carry a buggy up the stairs, etc., you cannot afford not to be civil towards people who are different'.

However, the neighbourhood approach to studying lived diversities with its emphasis on belonging suggests that (super)diverse neighbourhoods are *the* spaces where learning to live with diversity happens and where people develop indifference to difference. Some authors (Wise, 2011, Wessendorf, 2014b, Peters and de Haan, 2011, Noble, 2009) emphasize that frequent and regular contact with others, maintained by mundane practices within these localities such as picking up and dropping off children to school, visits in local parks, playgrounds as well as shopping in local supermarkets and malls, helps people to familiarize themselves with difference so that it becomes unnoticeable and unimportant in daily routines. Everyday practices in these diverse spaces which, according to authors writing on everyday multiculturalism, blur difference, demonstrate what Noble (2009: 51) has called 'unpanicked multiculturalism'. As he further stated (Noble, 2009: 61): '...if everyday cosmopolitanism entails habituation to 'strangers', then everyday cosmopolitanism dissolves their unfamiliarity'. Through close proximity when people interact with difference on a regular basis, a stranger becomes a familiar Other. I claim that such an interpretation of civility towards diversity suggests a normative bias in the literature towards positive practices.

Of course, it is important to acknowledge the connectedness and bonds created by proximity. As Back (2009: 209) pointed out, the story we tend to neglect is that people living alongside each other in diverse places do predominantly get along. This is reinforced by Wise, who stated that positive encounters had not been given enough analytical attention before and argued that it was important to understand how people '... try to create new forms of community and neighbourliness' (Wise, 2006: 185). Even though I agree with Wise, I argue that positive practices should not be conceptualized separately to conflict and tensions. Strategies of co-existence should be recognised not only as individualised cultural practices that give us 'a sense of hopeful affect and reinvest hope, trust and commitment to the urban commons' (Wise, 2013: 45), but also because they help us identify complex ways of negotiating 'race' and ethnicity in the new context of (super)diverse Western societies. Hence, in conceptualizing belonging it is necessary to take into consideration what Yuval-Davis (2006: 209) called national 'political projects of belonging' that construct the notion of citizenship by excluding some racialized categories. Back (2009) and Amin (2005) remind us that community is a moral and political project. Thus, it is important to account for broader contexts in understandings of everyday encounters with difference in diverse neighbourhoods.

The literature on everyday lived diversities conceptualizes the sense of belonging on a local neighbourhood level and seems to ignore the broader contexts constructing a sense of belonging to society beyond the micro spatial contexts. However, residents might express various levels of engagement with neighbourhood life, depending on their personal biographies, social identities and socio-economic status. People's lives are not confined to their neighbourhoods. Furthermore,

mobile and transnational migrants express belonging to other communities, not necessarily spatially bounded ones, but ones based on ethnic ties or shared interests (Glick Schiller et al., 2011).

I claim that diversity should not be comprehended solely in terms of situated cultural experience but also as a political concept of ordering the nation and establishing hierarchies of belonging. These broader processes influence individuals' subjective experiences of lived diversities and direct encounters with cultural others. Some neighbourhood studies based in the USA explored lived diversities through the lens of critical race theory and found that the appreciation of diversity is intertwined with established racial hierarchies that reinforce whiteness as power and status (Burke, 2012, Mayorga-Gallo, 2014). Thus, these studies manage to link structural issues of inequalities with everyday interactions, positive and negative, that are claimed to be driven by colour blindness. My research also attempts to discuss the reproduction of structural hierarchies in everyday practices with others.

### Lived diversities in (super)diverse settings

The investigation into encounters with difference is not confined to studies on neighbourhoods. Some authors focus on specific social settings. Although usually diverse, they are not necessarily approached from the neighbourhood perspective, but often studied through multi-sited ethnography. Methodologically, these sites are explored as contact zones and their positive influence in enhancing convivial practices is emphasized. In this section, I will elaborate on those concepts and discuss their application in empirical studies of lived diversities, arguing that both 'conviviality' and 'contact zone' are interpreted by some as enhancing positive interactions which ignore racism and set an over-celebratory tone of lived diversities.

### Contact zones

Social settings are often understood as spaces facilitating positive practices between individuals. Thus, encounters with cultural others are investigated in diverse places such as workplaces, street markets, cafés, restaurants and shopping malls, where frequent interactions allow people to become familiar with one another. This emphasis on contact may be partially derived from interest in the contact hypothesis introduced by the psychologist, Gordon Allport (1958). The theory makes certain assumptions about the role of direct contact in reducing people's bias against members of an outgroup. It identifies a few requirements for contact to be successful, such as frequency and regularity of contact, shared goals between individuals, support from institutional authorities as well as equal status of participants. These ingredients for an ideal interaction are difficult, if not impossible, to find in real life scenarios and the theory has been criticized since (Valentine, 2008). However, it seems that it has found appeal amongst some scholars on everyday multiculturalism

who look into interactions in diverse spaces, where frequent direct encounters take place and where individuals are obliged to interact with cultural others. While authors may not refer to the contact hypothesis directly (but see Matejskova and Leitner, 2011, Peters and de Haan, 2011), the literature emphasizes the need to investigate the role of frequent and regular contact with cultural others in diverse social settings and their 'potential to play a part in challenging racist discourses and stereotypes of unknown others' (Watson, 2009b: 1582). Even though the scholars recognize that contact in diverse social settings does not necessarily lead to reducing prejudice, they emphasize its role in facilitating positive encounters with difference and conceptualize such spaces as contact zones.

The term contact zone was coined by Mary Louise Pratt, who defined contact zones as: 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today' (Pratt, 2008: 7). According to Pratt, a contact zone is not any encounter but one with a pedagogical outcome, when people of various backgrounds who meet for the first time learn about other cultures through dialogue, a process involving unavoidable tensions. Pratt used an example of a university course on culture which acted as a contact zone where she, other staff members and students challenged the prevalent Western bias in understanding culture, ideas and values. As she explained, '[a]long with rage, incomprehension, and pain, there were exhilarating moments of wonder and revelation, mutual understanding, and new wisdom - the joys of the contact zone' (Pratt, 1991: 39). There are studies which follow Pratt's definition and investigate 'organized encounters' (Wilson, 2017) in contact zones that are created to produce spaces for interactions between people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds and provide an opportunity to challenge negative perceptions and develop social bonds (Askins and Pain, 2011, Mayblin et al., 2016b, Sundberg, 2006). Wilson (2017) pointed out that these types of encounters should recognize power relations and subjective meanings driving the projects.

While Pratt pointed out that tensions, resulting from histories of oppression, may arise during encounters with cultural difference, and these must be addressed, some of the current literature conceptualizes contact zones as merely diverse public places enhancing positive relations (Wise, 2009, Neal et al., 2015, Wise, 2004, Rzepnikowska, 2016a). Contact zones tend to be described as (super)diverse settings in which banal everyday routines supposedly diminish difference. The sites that have been researched include parks (Neal et al., 2015), bus journeys (Wilson, 2011), street markets (Hiebert et al., 2014, Watson, 2009b), shopping malls (Wise, 2011) or cafés and fast food restaurants (Jones et al., 2015, Anderson, 2012). Some authors (Rzepnikowska, 2016a: 123, Wise, 2009: 22) even quote Pratt's definition of contact zone as 'the space in which peoples

geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations' leaving out the rest of the sentence, which I believe is crucial to her conceptualisation of contact: '...usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict' (Pratt, 2008: 8). In such conceptualizations of contact zones there is a risk of overlooking the symbolic power relations and social hierarchies embedded in social spaces and interactions within them. I believe that these interpretations reinforce a shift in the literature towards exploring mainly positive encounters and as a result omits tensions.

I argue that ordinary public places defined in the literature as contact zones reduce Pratt's conceptualisation to a descriptive term that characterises certain diverse spatial contexts. Such a definition is similar to the term 'cosmopolitan canopies', i.e. 'heterogenous and densely populated bounded public spaces within cities that offer a respite from this wariness, settings where a mix of people can feel comfortable enough to relax their guard and go about their business more casually' (Anderson, 2012: 3). These spaces are diverse and are characterised by fleeting interactions, glances and smiles, small chit-chat and other brief interactions. They are often considered to be neutral, enhancing civility towards others and making people familiar and comfortable with difference by sharing space together. Some authors even claim that co-presence marked by rubbing shoulders in a queue, sitting close to one another in commercial places or consuming food in the same space of a fast-food restaurant play a role in overcoming boundaries of cultural differences (Jones et al., 2015, Wise, 2011).

Similar to neighbourhood studies, the scholarship on contact zones also explores positive interactions between individuals in diverse places, which seem to contribute to intercultural recognition, expressed by 'rub[bing] along' (Watson, 2006: 2). The apparent cosmopolitan character of these spaces accommodates individuals from various backgrounds and obliges them to act in a civil manner towards one another. However, there is no evidence that these encounters can eliminate prejudice (Valentine, 2008); for example, they do not have the capacity to eliminate everyday racist practices because these are based on entrenched structural and ideological forms of racism (Essed, 1991). Thus, addressing those issues needs to go beyond exploring cosmopolitan banal interactions. Racism and conviviality can and do exist together and everyday interactions often include contradictory practices of negotiating ambivalent identities that are shaped by broader political economic and social contexts (Clayton, 2009).

To conclude, conceptualisations of contact zones as creating spaces for connectedness, opportunities for convivial interactions and learning civility towards cultural others leaves little room to discuss racialization processes and conflicts embedded in cultural encounters. Pratt, after

all, discussed contact zones in the colonial context. I claim that applying her concept to everyday lived diversities should also encompass tensions resulting from societal power relations that have their roots in colonialism. When contact is reduced to the physical co-presence of diverse individuals, assumed to be equal, contact zones are portrayed as neutral with little consideration of gendered, racialized and classed divisions embedded in spaces constructed by power relations (Tonkiss, 2006). Moreover, Massey (2005) argued that spaces should not be looked at as static and fixed places but as dynamic interactions between people and objects within certain historical and political contexts. Thus, investigations of encounters with difference would benefit from considerations of these symbolic interactions and meanings of spaces in which people come to contact together.

By considering social hierarchies and power dynamics entrenched in everyday interactions we understand that civility does not necessarily translate into acceptance of difference. Valentine and Harris (2016: 923), for example, suggested that civility towards diversity may be an expression of political correctness, a perceived requirement forced upon individuals by equality laws. The performed civility hides their concerns about their socio-economic insecurity and the perceptions of legal entitlements of ethnic minorities, which supposedly put them in a more privileged position in relation to the white majority. Moreover, civility may have various meanings in different contexts, reflecting people's perceptions and adjustments to specific social circumstances. And while Britishness is becoming more inclusive of all ethnicities and 'races', as the London Olympics 2012 opening ceremony demonstrated (Werbner, 2013), racialized thinking has not been eroded (Goldberg, 2015), as some of the reactions to the London Olympics such as questioning Britishness of some of the athletes by media, attest (Werbner, 2013: 413). These racialization processes need to be addressed in investigating everyday encounters with difference.

This issue has been elaborated on by Paul Gilroy. His use of the concept of conviviality has influenced recent interest of the literature on everyday multiculturalism in conceptualising living with difference in terms of convivial practices.

### Conviviality

Gilroy's most cited reference in the literature on everyday encounters with difference defines conviviality as 'the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas' (2004: xi). Gilroy, critical of multiculturalism, pointed out '... the absurdity and triviality of ever racializing difference' (2004: 39-40) in the everyday lives of young people, who develop a capacity to make 'race' and ethnicity irrelevant. He emphasized, however, that diminishing racial difference in everyday lives is accompanied by the

continuous reproduction of racialized order through cultural, media and political discourses, which, he claimed, reflect a post-colonial melancholia; that is, the perseverance of the myth of the greatness of the British Empire and the collective longing for the imperial past and power it represents. The problem he identified is that Britain is still not willing to deal with the cruelties of colonialism and looks back at its shameful past with admiration and pride. National amnesia reinforces white privilege and the notion of a white British 'imagined community' continues to be cherished. Thus, Gilroy treats convivial cultures with caution. While he recognized that they are likely to develop, politics and popular discourses are still driven by racism, which needs to be addressed in order to for there to be a meaningful shift in society.

Some empirical studies (reviewed in Wise and Noble, 2016) draw on both Gilroy's definition as well as the Spanish word 'convivencia', with the latter emphasizing 'the action of living and interacting together' (Rzepnikowska, 2016a: 122). Conviviality as such is understood more as 'a mode of being and interacting' (Neal et al., 2013: 316). The concept describes various practices of co-existence, varying from fleeting encounters in public spaces (Radice, 2016), described by Neal et al. (2015: 471) as '*light* conviviality', sensory exchanges of smell and taste of ethnic food in commercial spaces (Rhys-Taylor, 2013, Wise, 2011), to more meaningful interactions such as local community events organized to bring residents together (Rzepnikowska, 2016a) or inter-ethnic bonds created in diverse workplaces (Wise, 2016, Rzepnikowska, 2017). Convivial practices may also include tensions (Heil, 2014, Vigneswaran, 2014, Karner and Parker, 2011). '...[A] context-dependent and flexible understanding of conviviality' proposed by Morawska (2014: 372) appears to reflect a wide spectrum of practices and capabilities comprehended by the term conviviality. This, I argue, weakened it as a conceptual tool, with confusing if not contested meanings (see Nowicka and Vertovec, 2014 for the literature review on conviviality).

The 'convivial turn' (Neal et al., 2013: 315) represents a shift in the literature towards mainly positive encounters (but see Back and Sinha, 2016, Rzepnikowska, 2017, Valluvan, 2016), and can also be seen in other similar concepts. The emphasis on positive encounters stressed by conviviality is often similar to the conceptualization of 'everyday cosmopolitanism' as processes of making ethnic difference banal in everyday lives (Noble, 2013). In philosophy, cosmopolitanism is understood as a belief in universal connectedness between people, a moral concern about human interdependence (Appiah, 2006, Brown, 2012). However, its many interpretations have broadened the meaning of the term (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002). Formerly associated with elites' moral predisposition of openness to other cultures (Hannerz, 2007), everyday cosmopolitanism has been reconceptualised to include middle and working class individuals' everyday practices of inter-

cultural belonging (Datta, 2009, Noble, 2009, Werbner, 1999) that build positive relations across racial or ethnic differences.

Nonetheless, it seems that facing growing criticism some authors who in their earlier work stressed the importance of studying positive relations are now more cautious about framing lived diversities as an achievement and are more likely to acknowledge that racism and positive practices are not mutually exclusive (Wise and Noble, 2016, Wessendorf, 2017). Amanda Wise even admitted that her further work would look at the 'paradoxes around the co-existence of conviviality and racism' (Neal, 2015: 999). This suggests a shift in the everyday lived diversities literature, which I hope my research will contribute to.

### Everyday multiculturalism and racism

Racism is a term with contested meanings in academic debates as well as in political and media discourses. Its conceptualization relates to the contentious notions of 'race', that has been defined in various ways depending on the political, geographical and historical contexts. While in contemporary societies it is widely accepted that 'race' is a social construct rather than a biological trait, racism has not vanished. Various forms of racisms are still embedded in social structures and reproduced in everyday lives. It is, however, becoming more difficult to address racism in a supposedly post-racial reality where 'races' have been rejected as a physical phenomenon. As Goldberg (2015: 152) pointed out, '[r]acisms dis-appear behind the formal deletion of racial classification, state regulation, and legal refusal of racial definition. They express themselves anew in the name of racial disappearance, disavowal, and denial. Racisms proliferate in the wake of the supposed death of race'.

Attempts to challenge racist practices often are met with a backlash against apparently prevalent political correctness. Contemporary forms of racisms are frequently disguised as freedom of speech, colour-blindness and acceptance of a diverse society. As Bonilla-Silva (2014) suggested, these are more nuanced ways of expressing contemporary racism, which he defined as 'racism without racists' reinforcing the no-race ideology. The ongoing discrimination and racial stigmatization reflected in institutional racism and structural inequalities are more difficult to identify. The political and media discourses pointing at inherently different, and implicitly inferior, cultures of migrants and minorities represent these subtler ways of racisms.

As contemporary racisms categorize individuals into different 'races' based on the cultural traits, I comprehend discriminatory and marginalizing practices towards white minorities also as racism. Their different cultures, embodied in different nationalities and languages, are perceived as a socio-economic and cultural threat. This negative categorization contributes to structural and everyday



marginalisation. As historically evident, racism can be directed to white minorities (Guglielmo & Salerno, 2003; Ignatiev, 1995; Kushner, 2005). These new forms of racism experienced currently by East Europeans in Britain racialize them as culturally inferior. Various forms of racist practices directed against their apparently different culture occur on a structural and interpersonal levels (Fox, Morosanu, & Szilassy, 2012; Rzepnikowska, 2018).

I understand racism as an ideology that defines groups of people as inferior according to their biological and/or cultural differences. This ideology is maintained structurally through socio-economic inequalities of minorities and on an interpersonal level, through everyday practices of exclusion and discrimination (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009). In my research I focus on the everyday racism. As Essed (1991: 177) first defined it, 'everyday racism (...) connects structural forces of racism with routine situations in everyday life. It links ideological dimensions of racism with daily attitudes and interprets the reproduction of racism in terms of the experience of it in everyday life'. While Essed's study focused on the experiences of racism amongst women of colour, I use her definition to understand racist practices relating white Polish migrants in Britain. However, I research two dimensions of everyday racism, i.e. as it may appear from and towards Poles. This allows me to avoid the perpetrator/victim dichotomy and to unravel complexities of everyday racism as part of lived diversities.

When exploring racism towards Poles in my research, I follow van Dijk's (1992) approach of defining it in terms of perceptions of racism rather than treating them as actual discriminatory practices. Usually these negative experiences shared by the participants during the fieldwork are not observed by me directly and therefore, cannot be validated. However, the interpretations of certain situations as racist constitute an important dimension of Poles' everyday lives in Britain and affect their practices and social relations with others. These perceptions seem to reflect Poles' awareness of the low socio-economic status, acquired through the secondary socialization during migration, i.e. from media, friends and families as well as everyday experiences. Often they interpret situations through scenarios of racism (Essed, 1991) and interpret practices as racist, based on their previous experiences and gathered knowledge.

However, as noticed by Parutis (2011), the racial identity of Poles as white Europeans equips them with tools to also perpetrate racism. The everyday discourses and practices that reflect racist ideologies are evident when they fixate certain attributes with particular cultural or biological traits. These practices may follow racist ideologies from both Polish and British contexts (Nowicka, 2017). Thus, they vary from crude forms of explicit racist name calling, jokes and hate speech to more subtle ways of denying of racism and defending immigration control in the sake of protecting

Britain from the foreign cultures and religions perceived as threats. Poles' racist practices are engrained in their process of adjusting to the diverse society and maintaining their socio-economic status. In the everyday negotiations of their ethnic and national identity they gradually adapt the dominant racial hierarchy in Britain. There are different forms of racisms Poles express and they are contingent upon time and space in which they are articulated. Thus, I argue it is important to contextualize these spatially and temporally situated practices within national racialized hierarchies of belonging in Britain to understand how broader context shapes Poles' everyday understandings of difference.

While, as discussed in the previous section, there is a tendency to focus on intercultural connection, it is important to acknowledge that racism is acknowledged and to some extent addressed by all authors working on everyday multiculturalism. However, it appears to be understood as practices or attitudes which should be treated separately to the lived diversities that are associated with successfully living together. Racism is often recognized but not elaborated on (Datta, 2009, Noble, 2009, Wessendorf, 2014b, Wise, 2006). For example, Wessendorf explicitly states that 'the focus of this book lies on the everyday lived reality of diversity and not on racism' (Wessendorf, 2014: 24). In other cases, racism is included as part of the everyday lived diversities framework, but still discussed separately to convivial everyday practices. Thus, Wise and Velayutham (2009) have a small section on everyday tensions in their edited collection 'Everyday multiculturalism', while most of it is focused on everyday solidarities and cosmopolitan strategies, making everyday racism a marginalized subject. In other articles, Wise addresses the issue of everyday racism and emphasizes the need to understand the locality of racist practices (Wise, 2010, Wise, 2016). She explains it as feelings of nostalgia invested in a place and embodied experiences of the local neighbourhoods expressed through smell, taste and memories, which, transformed by new migrants, produce emotions of resentment and hostility. Moreover, by locating everyday experiences within a certain space, she contextualizes 'ethnic jokes' in blue-collar workplaces and challenges the notion of racism as causing tensions but claims that 'joking consensus' can 'produce new modes of belonging and deal with uncertainty' (Wise, 2016: 496).

Although I agree that racism needs to be explored as practices rather than attitudes with consideration of the micro-contexts in which they take place in order to understand the nuances of experiences, I believe that more attention should be paid to the broader contexts producing racism beyond the specific situations in which racism occurs. Some authors attempt to overcome the positive/negative binary by pointing out that conviviality and racism are intertwined in everyday practices (Back and Sinha, 2016, Tyler, 2017, Valluvan, 2016, Bloch and Dreher, 2009, Rzepnikowska, 2017, Rzepnikowska, 2016a). Driven by the framework of conviviality they offer a

valuable insight into how people build convivial relations despite experiencing racism. Still, little is known about how the same individuals may express both negative and positive practices and this is a gap my research addresses.

A separate body of literature, which focuses on everyday racism (Essed, 1991), accounts for the wider contexts of racist practices by investigating the relationship between the racialization processes affecting individual's socio-economic status and the everyday experiences of exclusion or discrimination. Thus, we learn how whiteness may be reproduced discursively in everyday life as an unconscious privilege and norm (Wells and Watson, 2005, Frankenberg, 1993) and the subtle and implicit forms of everyday racism (Velayutham, 2009, Herbert et al., 2008, Noble, 2006). The scholarship on everyday racism also explores strategies of resisting racialized identities by denying racism (Fox et al., 2015, van Dijk, 1992) or perpetrating racism towards other minorities (Han, 2009, Fox, 2013, McDowell et al., 2007). It also investigates whiteness as power and demonstrates how certain white people with lower socio-economic status can be also racialized (Hartigan, 1997, Fox et al., 2012). In this way, this literature recognizes the impact of ideological and structural forms of racism on everyday practices, manifested through negotiations of status within the hierarchies of belonging.

Much of the literature on everyday multiculturalism focused on positive encounters seems to emphasize the prevalent ethos of peaceful co-existence in (super)diverse areas. The nuances of how power relations and hierarchies are reproduced in everyday encounters are acknowledged but treated as secondary in exploring various modes of successfully living together. Rather than claiming that 'good multiculturalists' can be also 'bad racists' (Wise, 2006: 183), I propose to systematically explore how people are one or another and situate their practices within broader contexts of hierarchies of belonging. This approach helps to connect the micro-context with structural processes that construct identities.

### A new methodological approach

I agree with the literature on everyday multiculturalism that the everyday dimension is an important one '...to make detailed observations of how they [social actors] construct, combat, alter and justify their actions in concrete terms' (Semi et al., 2009: 69). It offers valuable insights that macro approaches are not able to scrutinize, such as how the categories we operate with are either reinforced or resisted through everyday ordinary practices with others. I recognize that the spatial contexts in which individuals interact are also important and these affect their situated experiences with others, which are often localized within a particular area with certain codes of practice. Lived diversities, however, are not confined to a (super)diverse context. Too much focus on positive

interactions in diverse spaces risks trivializing tensions and overlooking how everyday practices can change according to context. I do not doubt that banal co-existence is common, but I aim to explore how it is intertwined with other practices, including everyday racism.

Investigating everyday racism is not without challenges. The decisions researchers make to either remain a sociological bystander (Back, Crabbe, & Solomos, 2001; Islam, 2000) when witnessing racist practices, or to challenge them by openly experiencing their anti-racist political agenda (Back, 2001; Frankenberg, 1993; Ware, 1992) bring different political and ethical challenges. As Frankenberg (1993: 31) noticed, 'no presentation of self is really neutral', but it becomes ethically problematic, if researchers attempt to portray themselves to their participants as neutral.

My ethnographic approach of observing everyday practices means that coming across racialized discourses or racist practices is unavoidable. And I need to consider how my position towards my participants in relation to racism may affect the collected data and my relationship with them. Islam (2000) suggested that challenging racism of her own community would have alienated her from her respondents and therefore, she decided to remain silent about her anti-racist views during her fieldwork. I undertake a similar approach; however, it is not unproblematic. Back (2001 :38) warned against the possible trap researchers can fall into, when they create a moral distance between non-racist themselves and their racist subjects. The danger lies in pushing racism into peripheries without acknowledging its persistent presence across all societal dimensions. The aim of social scientists, as he further claimed, should be to recognize 'the uncomfortable similarities' between an ethnographer and her participants in order to understand the complexities and ambivalences of racism engrained in society that researchers are part of.

I believe that being Polish gives me certain advantages in collecting data on racism. The shared cultural background, the Polish language and a similar migration story enable me to connect with other Poles in Britain relatively easily, and over the years I have come across many racial practices and discourses from Polish people. While I have never resisted to openly discuss racism with my friends and families, I am reluctant to do it in this study due to the nature of my research methodology. My ethnographic research involves a number of encounters with individuals and focuses on various strategies of lived diversities not only racism. I am aware that making my personal opinions explicit in cases when racism is encountered, may bring the attention of my respondents to debated differences and possibly make them more conscious of their behaviour towards certain people in my presence in the following meetings. Thus, due to concerns of alienating my respondents I decided not to express my opinions unless explicitly asked.

I do not claim that researchers of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds would not be able to gather data on racist practices. The analysis of racism in Wellman's book 'Portraits of white racism' (1977), in which the most fruitful interviews with white men were conducted by a black research assistant, proves that it may not be the case. Nevertheless, I believe that my Polish identity enables me to capture racist practices or discourses outside the interview settings, occurring in various spatial and temporal contexts, with my presence having little impact on these expressions.

The nature of my research that focuses on everyday experiences of individuals allows 'to permit the reader to see whole, complex persons' (Wellman, 1977: 79). This approach enhances an understanding of complexities of everyday lived diversities, which everyday racism is often part of. Hence, even though I am not explicit about my political agenda, I am conscious of not approaching my participants from a morally superior position. My background and personal experiences of learning to live with diversity in Britain allow me to recognize similarities between myself and my respondents and contextualize racism within more complex processes that shape their encounters with difference.

Following Sara Ahmed's conceptualization, I look at encounters as contact with the unfamiliar other, during which our identities are negotiated and the boundaries of what is familiar are re-constructed. As she claimed, '[t]he term encounter suggests a meeting, but a meeting which involves surprise and conflict' (Ahmed, 2000: 7). I comprehend encounters beyond direct interactions and investigate the discursive presence of otherness, even if physically absent. This leads me to contextualize encounters within wider relations of power that spatially order people on a local level within urban spaces and as a nation-wide project of inclusion and exclusion in diverse society.

I understand diversity in Britain as an outcome of Britain's political, economic, social and cultural history, in which social relations have been shaped by a history of colonialism, immigration and globalization, all impacting people's localized understandings of cultural and ethnic identities and which are manifested in everyday practices with others. I explore lived diversities not as direct encounters in specific settings but as contingent practices during which people's understandings of diversity and their own status within multicultural hierarchical society are negotiated and the meanings of difference are constructed. Instead of considering either positive or negative interactions, I look at people's practices as an ongoing process of learning to live with difference through multiple trajectories, i.e. subjective experiences of spatial and temporal context, personal biographies, socio-economic status and racialized hierarchies embedded in bodies and spaces. Both positive and negative practices are part of the process. In order to grasp the complexities of

practices, I propose researching everyday encounters with difference through the focus on Poles and their practices with others across a number of social settings.

### Polish citizens in Britain

There are three aspects of the migration of Poles to Britain which shape their everyday practices with others: Poles come from a relatively homogenous country and often encounter certain ethnic or cultural identities for the first time in Britain; they have an ambiguous status in Britain and they enter a society with already established racialized hierarchies of belonging, which they learn while settling in.

I understand Poles' status in Britain as located at an intersection of economic, social and cultural of power within British political order. Poles, even though tend to belong to the working class in Britain, may perceive their status as higher than their socio-economic class if their educational background is higher and due to their previous work experiences. They often treat their low-skilled jobs as a temporary stage, necessary for the upward mobility (Eade et al., 2007). Moreover, following Weber's claims (2010 [1921]), having a particular ethnic affiliation also influences one's prestige by either benefiting or disadvantaging them. Thus, Poles' whiteness and Christianity are seen by Poles as cultural traits that bring them closer to the white British majority and may improve their status. Whiteness is, therefore, not just about colour as their white identities do not guarantee them access to the economic social and political privileges enjoyed by the British majority. British whiteness is a normative dimension that is associated with power and invisibility and Poles strive to achieve it. These perceived affiliations, however, are not fixed and their boundaries are constantly negotiated (Wimmer, 2008). Thus, I look at the relationship between encounters and status and investigate how the economic and socio-cultural position Poles claim to have in British society affects their practices with others. This focus on my research therefore draws attention to the link between culture, 'race', ethnicity and class. I claim that inter-cultural encounters need to be looked at through a lens of racialized hierarchies of belonging in British society.

In assessing Poles' practices in the context of their ambivalent status in Britain, I draw on Bridget Anderson's (2013) citizenship typology. Anderson claimed that Britain is imagined as a community of good citizens who possess values of hard work, obey the law and contribute to society. This national myth that creates the community of value, also constructs the need of protecting it against certain people, who do not meet the above expectations, the so-called failed citizens and non-citizens. They fail in representing the common values and threaten the security of nation. The former includes people who use benefits and criminals, 'the enemy within', while the latter is embodied in the category of a migrant, an outsider who is perceived as not sharing the valued ideas

and therefore is undesirable in the national community. However, as Anderson further claims, there is an in-between category of the tolerated citizen, which can be occupied by those migrants who are conditionally accepted, that is those who work hard and pay taxes. Their status is contingent because tolerated citizens can be pushed down to the category of non-citizens if they disrespect shared values.

Anderson argued that politics of immigration control, that define migrants as either political or economic actors, construct homogenous categories of insiders and outsiders, 'us' and 'them' in racial, economic and gendered terms. All types of citizens, good, tolerated, failed and non-citizens, are imagined as male. The good citizen is perceived as a hard working white British male, while the non-citizen is believed to be a bogus, poor and threatening man of colour. The tight control over newcomers' status, constructed as asylum seekers, economic migrants, spouses or students, orders people according to their deservingness in the community of value. Hence, the policies create hierarchies of desirability in a legal, economic and political sense. This racialized ranking of people's belonging creates unequal social relations between them. The policies exclude those who are defined as poor and not genuine but privilege people perceived as reflecting the values of British community, i.e. tolerated citizens. These, however, are only conditionally accepted. Hence, they have to prove that they are worthy of being part of society by symbolically distancing themselves from failed and non-citizens. Ghassan Hage's concept of 'governmental belonging' (1998: 60) can help understand how they may want to achieve this. He developed it in the context of his critique of Australian colourblind multiculturalism. He conceptualised 'governmental belonging' as practices that reflect individuals' claimed position of power in society. Some members of society who perceive themselves as belonging to the white majority exercise their privilege by excluding people who according to them are less deserving of citizenship. Thus, those 'spatial managers' (who manage national space), who express some attributes of whiteness, i.e. Christianity, ethnicity, higher socio-economic status or dominant culture, see themselves as being in a position of power to decide who belongs to the nation and who does not, and this can be reflected in their everyday practices with others. Hage situates these practices within the context of the Australian 'white nation fantasy' that is reproduced by the prevalent tolerance discourse. Rather than equality, tolerance reinforces racialized power relations between 'us', being white Australians, and 'them' - minorities and migrants.

I argue that Poles are tolerated citizens in British society. They are perceived as hard working and as contributing economically to society (Datta and Brickell, 2009). However, this does not spare them, along with other East Europeans, from incidents of everyday racism (Burnett, 2011) as well as cultural racialization in public and media discourses (Fox et al., 2015). Their ambivalent position

is contradictory and carries tensions between the claims of belonging to British society based on their whiteness and legal status and the burden of being represented as an outsider, an immigrant, threatening the British community of value. I look at their encounters with difference, considering those factors as contributing to the process of learning to live with diversity. They constitute a context through which living with difference is explored in this study. I claim that this approach helps to avoid valorising everyday encounters with difference through the good/bad binary. Instead, the practices are understood through the lens of people's status, which shapes their understanding of British society and affects their strategies of fitting in and becoming an integral part of it. Their everyday lived diversities are interpreted through their struggles to become recognised as citizens at a particular time of their migration journey and within specific spatial contexts.

In my study I chose a small number of participants who live and work in various urban racialized and classed neighbourhoods and followed them in their routine practices at work, school, home and during leisure activities. This approach allowed me to observe the many interactions with cultural others in various social settings performed by these individuals. I explored how frequently and regularly people encounter others in their everyday lives, depending on their job, socio-economic position and English language competency. It revealed the transience and ambivalence of defining and negotiating difference, which was contingent upon time, space and the perceived status of my respondents and people they interact with. In this way I not only witnessed their practices in situ but also gained access to their narratives about those interactions, capturing their subjective understandings of others, space and themselves in relation to British society. Their encounters are problematized by taking into account those complex processes entangled in everyday experiences of diversity and conceptualised through the social hierarchies that are embedded in (super)diverse British society, rather than analysed merely as inter-cultural exchanges between individuals in particular settings. In choosing to focus on Polish citizens who migrated to Britain this approach allows me to look at diversities as a learning process since newcomers from a different background expose certain norms by breaching them in daily routines while simultaneously integrating into the new cultural context.

## Conclusion

Scholars of everyday multiculturalism are often reluctant to use the categories of ethnicity, 'race' or class, pointing out instead the complexities of identities in peoples' everyday lives and emphasizing a cosmopolitan turn in peoples' perceptions of themselves and others. They claim that describing identities with these 'old' terms does not reflect everyday experiences in increasingly diversified societies. I agree that these complexities have to be considered and a multi-dimensional



perspective should be applied to investigating everyday lived diversities. As Meissner argued, individuals' personal stories, previous experiences and future aspirations affect their migration experience (Meissner, 2015). However, I believe that the current literature's emphasis on everyday diversity as exchanges across cultural differences without proper acknowledgment of the effects of 'race' and ethnicity on identities risks trivializing the importance of these categories for people's everyday experiences of diversity. The micro approaches of the everyday multiculturalism scholarship, discussed in this chapter, do not engage with broader discourses and practices that systematically exclude certain people on the basis of their racial or ethnic backgrounds. It is true that identities are complex and there is strong evidence in the literature demonstrating that people treat 'race' and ethnicity as ordinary in everyday practices with others. Nevertheless, more consideration should be made when assessing social situations as convivial or interpreting civil inattention as indifference to difference. Certain interactions between cultural others which have been identified in scholarship as positive examples of accepting difference may be either driven by racialized thinking or conceal racist practices. Polite smiles or glances at cultural others do not necessarily represent positive experiences of diversity. Racializing practices are difficult to identify if the focus is on cultures in descriptive terms, i.e. peoples' national origins, language or food preferences. It is likewise difficult if the investigations are centred around negotiations of these identities through 'ethnic' or 'national' food consumption in restaurants, gift exchange between neighbours or brief interactions between parents at schools. These identities are not only descriptive categories identifying peoples' cultural background but each of them carries certain racialized connotations within a political and economic system in society. Looking at cultural differences without consideration of how negatively racialized/ethnicized categories play out in everyday interactions turns the debate into a mere description of everyday practices between actors, assumed to be equal, without either acknowledging or challenging racialized hierarchies. Hence, the fragmentation of identities encountered and negotiated in everyday lives seems to be detached from the national context of reproducing racial and ethnic hierarchies.

In contrast, I approach living with difference not as direct encounters occurring in any public space but as interactions between individuals with various statuses in society. I argue that it is important to re-address questions of 'race' and ethnicity in (super)diverse Britain. In doing so I do not claim that we should not acknowledge more complex social identities or that the focus should remain on established post-immigration minorities only. I suggest that exploring everyday lived diversities through the lens of the experiences of new migrants should take into account the racialized hierarchies in which everyday practices are embedded since they are likely to be reproduced in their everyday practices. In the process of learning to live with diversity, new migrants experience

‘everyday multiculturalism’ in relation to their own racial, religious, class and ethnic identities in a new context. Their everyday presentations of self (Goffman, 1971a) as good citizens are driven by their subjective understandings of diversity, related to their status.

My methodological approach, briefly introduced here, is crucial for my conceptualisation of living with difference. I will elaborate on this aspect in detail in the next chapter.

### 3 Researching lived diversities

My research interest comes from my personal experience of living in Britain. For almost thirteen years I have come across Poles in various social contexts. In different stages of my life I either lived, worked or socialized with other Poles, managing tensions between the pull of ethnic loyalty and integration. My migration story started in my early twenties as an economic immigrant in a low skilled sector with no prior knowledge of English. Throughout my years here I have met Poles of different socio-economic backgrounds, with whom I developed various relations connected to the stages of my socio-economic mobility. Having since read the literature on Polish migration about social capital, networking, competition and solidarity amongst Poles I could identify these issues in my own experiences. Learning to live with difference has been a part of my settling in Britain. However, this aspect of Polish migration is still underexplored. Therefore, my research is driven by the willingness to systematically investigate Poles' lived diversities in multicultural Britain. There is no doubt that my personal biography has had an impact on the research process and I reflect on its implications later in this chapter.

In this chapter I elaborate on my ethnographic method of accompanying individuals through their daily routines and observing their interactions in different social sites, i.e. in contexts that matter for them. Drawing on both traditional participant observations (Alexander, 2000, Alexander, 1996, Back, 1996) and 'go-along' interviews (Kusenbach, 2003) I developed a methodological approach, a series of ethnographic 'go-along observations'. I argue that the innovative method was necessary to gather rich contextual data that helped me address a gap in the literature on everyday lived diversities. I first discuss my methodological framework. I then provide a description of my data collection methods and the recruitment and profiles of the respondents. Finally, the chapter ends with a reflexive discussion on the ethical considerations that I faced during the research process.

#### Research questions and epistemological framework

The aim of my study is to explore Poles' everyday negotiations of difference with the focus on everyday practices through which racial, ethnic and class identities are constructed in the process of learning to live with diversity. Hence, the thesis addresses the following research questions:

- How do Polish citizens, coming from a relatively homogenous country, understand diversity in Britain?
- How do they interact with others in the process of learning to live with diversity?
- How are their lived diversities shaped by different contexts?

This research aims to contribute to the literature on everyday lived diversities by exploring the post-accession Polish citizens' complex practices with others through the lens of their ambiguous status in Britain. My methodological focus on individuals and their various strategies of engagement with diversity aims to respond to the spatial bias in the literature. The scholarship on everyday multiculturalism tends to look at (super)diverse settings and describe prevalent codes of behaviour in those contexts. My research investigates micro-geographies within various social sites and is preoccupied with meanings individuals ascribe to their social actions (Maso, 2001, Rock, 2001). I understand social reality as an interactional achievement between individuals and objects, through which subjective meanings are constructed and applied in everyday practices with others. My epistemological standpoint sees knowledge as produced in a process during which the researcher connects with the external world and offers her interpretation of observed social interactions. This knowledge is never complete and is driven by certain values that shape the researcher's perspective through which peoples' interpretations of social reality is represented (Schutz, 1967). Hence, I consider my role in the research process as co-producing knowledge, filtered through my subjective meanings, creativity and selectivity present in all stages of my research. I acknowledge that my ethnographic analysis offers my narrative, i.e. interpretation of social phenomena that I, as a researcher, participated in.

My interest in everyday encounters with difference naturally drew me towards the ethnographic method of collecting data. Ethnography enables researchers to immerse themselves in their respondents' lives and observe their experiences *in situ*. Ethnographic approaches situated within one social context, however, have limitations for appreciating migrants' transnational or diasporic networks (Falzon, 2009). A multi-sited ethnography addresses some of these constraints by looking at various points of connection and spaces as socially produced (Cook et al., 2009). I adapt this multi-sited approach not by selecting different sites but by following different individuals through the varied sites they select. As I argued in the previous chapter, much of the literature on everyday multiculturalism is focused on specific neighbourhoods or social sites, such as shops, restaurants, parks, or cafés and thus draws its conclusions based on observations of encounters within those spatial contexts. While we learn about the prevalent code of behaviour in those contexts, they tell us little about people's perceptions, judgements or subjective understandings of those spaces or the people they encounter in them. Without appreciation of personal biographies and previous experiences, it is difficult to explore the interpretations of diversity as it is directly experienced. I am interested in investigating the 'back stage' (Goffman, 1971a) practices, i.e. the hidden behaviour of Poles that is suppressed in public spaces through expressions of civility. The control of backstage can occur within the specific settings by switching to Polish or by changing the practices

once individuals move to different sites, where they are not seen by ‘the British audience’. Moreover, my conceptualisation of diversity as not confined to (super)diverse neighbourhoods suggests a different scope of the research enquiry. I argue that looking at individuals and their daily routines helps to unravel the fact that people’s lives are not necessarily limited to different neighbourhoods. And even if they are, individuals may still ignore diversity in (super)diverse neighbourhoods and then engage with diversity in more homogenous areas. With my research I aim to capture a whole range of interactions in various contexts.

These concerns led me to develop my methodology not around a specific setting or a community within a particular area, but instead to accompany individuals from various backgrounds in their daily routines throughout different parts of the city. The focus on individuals (as opposed to neighbourhoods or specific sites) and their various ways of negotiating difference enabled me to look at the prevalent strategies discussed in the literature (such as everyday cosmopolitanism, conviviality or indifference to difference) not as an ethos ascribed to a neighbourhood that may shape peoples’ positive interactions, but as repertoires of actions that individuals may apply in different contexts. Such a strategy allows me to look at lived diversities as individual practices rather than an achievement shaped by co-existence in a (super)diverse neighbourhood.

### Recruitment and sample profile

My aim was to recruit ten participants from various backgrounds based on gender, English language competency, and length of stay in Britain. I faced some difficulties with accessing respondents, which revealed my ambivalent relationship with the Polish community. Having moved to Bristol to do my PhD, I did not have connections with Poles there; I was not reliant on Polish networks, and I lived in a neighbourhood close the University with few if any Poles. For recruitment purposes, I had to immerse myself in the life of the Polish community. I started by attending local Polish events prior the beginning of the fieldwork. In one of them, which showcased local Polish entrepreneurs and businesses in a Polish community centre, I met two people who I exchanged contact details with, and we have since kept in touch. They later became two of my main gatekeepers. I had to find other channels of entry because I aimed to recruit individuals who were not necessarily connected to one geographically bounded Polish community and who lived in different neighbourhoods in Bristol. I approached Poles I met in cafés and Polish businesses (such as hairdressers, beauty salons) spread out in various areas of the city, I advertised my research on social media, and I contacted some local Polish services. Many people were interested in the interviews, but often refused to take part in the multi-sited observation. Some people tentatively agreed but resigned after the initial interview or the first couple of observations. I realised that I would be more successful if I was recommended to them by their acquaintances or friends. Due to

the nature of my research method, the level of trust and amount of time I required from participants made the role of gatekeepers all the more important. I used colleagues at the University to recruit a couple of participants, but these were Poles with good levels of English competency. It was more difficult to find, and earn the trust of, Poles who could not speak English well. While conducting fieldwork, I got to know other Poles who then helped me recruit other participants meeting the desired criteria. This strategy was more successful, although even then a number of people withdrew from the study after the initial interview. The recruitment process was long and labour-intensive due to the fact that I had to access Poles through different channels and because the method was met with reluctance by many of the people I approached. I found gatekeepers from different communities and ended up with six different channels for accessing ten Poles, varied in terms of demographic features (see Table 1).

My aim was not to treat Polish people in Bristol as constituting one (Polish) community, but instead to focus on individuals and their spatially contingent practices. Most of the Poles in my sample did not know one another and thus moved in different social circles. This does not reject the importance of their cultural background, but neither does it overemphasize its role in understanding or shaping their experiences of lived diversities. I am aware that my method attracted a certain type of respondent, and their willingness to invest time and effort in my research was not without the expectation that they would receive something in return. My relationship with them was therefore reciprocal. I offered or was asked for help with English (e.g. translating letters), helping write a blog post, shopping and dealing with customer service issues. Moreover, I realised that my research was an opportunity to socialize for some respondents, especially stay-at-home mums who appreciated having someone around when shopping and/or doing household chores. Others expressed gratitude for a chance to reflect on their migration journeys. The curiosity was mutual and helped me develop a stronger relationship with the respondents.

**Table 1 Profiles of the participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Length of stay in Britain (at the start of the fieldwork)</b>	<b>Employment status UK</b>	<b>Education in Poland</b>	<b>Living arrangements</b>	<b>Family status</b>
Adam	29	3 months	Hotel receptionist Full-time	Higher education (hospitality)	Rented house with his girlfriend, and five other people (mostly Polish)	In a relationship (shares the house with Paulina)
Simon	31	4 months	Warehouse worker Full-time	A-levels	Rented house with six other people (international)	Single
Tomek	21	11 months	Builder Self-employed	A-levels equivalent, (vocational)	Rented house with two other people (Poles)	Single at beginning of fieldwork, in a relationship at end
Kasia	37	1 year 8 months	Cleaner Part-time	GCSE equivalent	Rented flat, living with family	Married, three children
Paulina	29	2 years 6 months	Manager in a café Full-time	Higher education (cultural studies)	Rented house, living with husband and five other people (mostly Polish)	Married (shares the house with Adam and his partner Patrycja)
Ewa	39	8 years	Shop assistant Part-time	Higher education (teacher)	Rented flat; living with partner	In a relationship
Marcin	34	9 years	Specialist machinery Technician Full-time	A-levels equivalent, (vocational)	House owner, living with family	Married (to Monika; see below), one child
Monika	32	9 years	Support worker Full-time	Higher education (pedagogy)	House owner, living with family	Married (to Marcin; see above), one child
Anna	46	10 years	Shop assistant Part-time	Higher education (biomedicine)	Rented house, living with family	Married, three children

## Data Collection and Analysis

My data collection strategy was divided between 'go-along' participant observation sessions, seven to ten with each participant, combined with in-depth semi-structured interviews with every respondent, one at the start and one at the end of the data collection.

I developed my method as a combination of ideas from some traditional ethnographic studies of racial and ethnic minorities (Alexander, 1996, Alexander, 2000, Back, 1996) and 'go-along' or walking interviews (Anderson, 2004, Carpiano, 2009, Clark and Emmel, 2010, Kusenbach, 2003, Parzer et al., 2017). The 'go-along' interviewing method was designed to develop understandings of individuals' relations with places they tend to visit. The researchers mentioned followed their interviewees within specific spatial contexts and asked them questions about those spaces while observing their direct experiences which were being described. Thus, the method allows researchers to play a more proactive role in the process of producing knowledge through an observation of '(...) informants' spatial practices *in situ* while accessing their experiences and interpretations at the same time' (Kusenbach, 2003: 463). The ethnographic work of Claire Alexander and Les Back inspired my research by the authors' ability to connect local racialized practices within certain communities with broader racialized discourses that marginalized people of colour and Muslim minorities. The 'go-along' interviews gained my interest because of their focus on accompanying individuals throughout their everyday routines. Thus, my research derives from both, i.e. I situated individuals' everyday practices within a broader national context of hierarchies of belonging and applied a 'go-along' observation to gain knowledge about Poles' practices with others in various social contexts. These observations were not interviews, as in the case of the 'go-along' interviews but participant observation of peoples' daily routines and how they acted upon encountered differences. As Savage and Burrows (2007: 886) noted, social research becomes more peripheral in producing knowledge about the social world in the era of 'knowing capitalism' in which information technologies produce information which can reveal many trends and patterns in the society. Similarly, Back and Puwar (2013) by encouraging sociologists to use digital methods in their research, also call for engagement in more creative ways of conducting research to provide a sophisticated understanding of social reality. I believe that my approach is a step towards these innovations.

The data collection began with an interview. The purpose of this initial interview was to find out about my respondents' backgrounds, including their lives in Poland, their stories of migration, and the daily routines, which I planned to follow. I also wanted to develop a provisional map of the areas of the city in which they moved. The interviews were semi-structured, based on seven open-ended questions. They lasted between one and two hours and were conducted in various places



familiar to the respondents, e.g., cafés or homes. In the first interview and during the participant observation meetings I did not emphasise that the focus of my research was on racial or ethnic difference. I was concerned that revealing it would alter their behaviour. I explained instead that I was interested in Poles' encounters with others in the process of integrating into British society.

For go-along participant observations, I met with each participant in a variety of social settings. The fieldwork was conducted over ten months between June 2015 and March 2016. The go-along participant observations were discussed with participants in the initial interviews, where I explained that I would like them to take me through their everyday routines, and we would usually arrange the first 'go-along' participation then. The level of my engagement in observed social situations was determined by specific settings. Due to the structured nature of some sites I visited, such as workplaces, my presence there was regulated. Similarly, during a dance rehearsal, martial art training, or English language lesson, my observations were dictated by the constraints of the settings and my participation in events was limited. In the more commercial and public spaces as well as private settings of their homes, my presence was less constrained. On each occasion my participants decided whether they wanted to introduce me to their colleagues and friends. Sometimes I sat at the back and took notes in silence, other times I was involved in conversations with people acquainted with my respondents. The method required a flexible approach and I had to adapt to each situation as it happened. The observations lasted between thirty minutes to six hours. Rarely I saw my participants in one setting only. I tended to observe them across various sites in one day: home, school, shops, cafés, workplaces, sports centres, pubs etc. I went with them wherever they were happy to take me. Most of the 'go-along' observations introduced new settings, new people and new opportunities to learn about each of my participants.

While in the initial interview and the go-along observations I did not reveal the focus of my study on racial and ethnic differences, I communicated it explicitly in the exit interviews, when I asked them questions about certain types of difference they encountered and more broadly about their perceptions of diversity and the position of Polish citizens in Britain. In the final interviews we also reflected on the fieldwork process, verifying my interpretations of certain practices and events I had witnessed, and filling in gaps in my knowledge wherever possible. These interviews were less structured than the initial interviews as they focused on each individual and their experiences. I loosely followed a discussion guide with some general questions that I had prepared in advance. The exit interviews were shorter, lasting between thirty and sixty minutes.

Apart from the in-depth fieldwork with my participants, and as a result of immersing myself in the life of Polish community in Bristol over ten months, I spent a significant amount of time with other

Poles. I frequently visited Polish businesses, such as restaurants, shops, and hairdressers. I also visited the Polish church and participated in some events organized for Poles only. I met many Poles through my informants and I managed to catch up with them in various events, sometimes accidentally (e.g. when I attended a gig of a Polish band). Even though I had not actively recruited these people as my participants, the encounters with them gave me an opportunity to connect with other Poles and to better understand the way Polish communities in Bristol operate. Sometimes when I would chat informally with service providers or newly made acquaintances, I would realise that these ice-breaker conversations would not infrequently lead to topics of ethnic diversity and migration. The ease with which these themes were discussed revealed my privileged position of being perceived as a Pole, i.e. one of 'us'. I could engage quite comfortably in banal conversations with Poles and through them I was able to learn about their perceptions of diversity, observing how these perceptions emerged. I included some of these (anonymised) observations in my empirical chapters in order to validate similar experiences related by my respondents.

### Data analysis

I recorded my observations from my go-along participation observation in fieldnotes. I used an electronic fieldwork diary, i.e. I recorded my notes in an encrypted Word document on my computer immediately after the observations. Whenever I accompanied my participants I carried a small notebook to record dialogues and interactions, which I then elaborated on when completing the fieldwork diary. I tried not to do it in an obvious manner so that my participants would not feel self-conscious about their behaviour. I produced a lot of in-depth unstructured data in this way, which I then systematically analysed. In recording these notes I paid particular attention to:

- the area of the city we were in (the neighbourhood, what kind of people we walked passed/encountered, and a general feel for the scene);
- the specific settings where the interactions took place (people in these settings, the aesthetics, the types of interactions in these settings between strangers);
- the sorts of people encountered (in racial, ethnic, gender, age, and class terms, as my respondents commented on them or, lacking that, as I deduced them myself), my respondents' interactions with them (conversations, gestures, looks, smiles, indifference, the tone of voice, etc); and,
- interactions with me (the extent to which they involved me in the situation and how my presence might have influenced their behaviour).

From my notes, I entered the in-between stage of the research, i.e. '[n]ot the collection of data and not the final narrative and analysis but the long series of processes mediating the two'

(Glucksmann, 2000: 26). I used NVivo to code the data from the participant observation and interviews. This was the optimal and most thorough approach to analyse and thematically synthesize the collected data. I began by identifying and mapping the areas of the city where my respondents spent most of their time, with attention to the level of engagement they had with different neighbourhoods, including those they avoided. I then looked at the particular sites they attended and the way those settings were typical (or not) for the demographics and aesthetics of those areas. I also grouped their encounters into different types based on their degree of involvement with others. I then created a profile document for each respondent, which included an outline of their migration journeys and notes on their everyday routines and past experiences. This helped me gain a better understanding of their personal biographies, and also to contextualize their encounters in relation to these individual circumstances. Moreover, I created a spreadsheet with demographic details (including education and work experience in Poland), sites of encounters, types of activities they regularly engaged in, and networks of acquaintances, friends, and families. This process helped me contextualize observed practices with others by taking into account their personal biographies. It allowed me to identify patterns in their everyday experiences whilst recognizing the role their status played. I crosschecked the typical themes and patterns from my field notes against my profile documents and spreadsheet to ensure I did not lose sight of the broader context of their encounters. I avoided using NVivo for data analysis due to the de-contextualising limitations of qualitative software. This process of going back and forth between the data (in NVivo), the profiles, and the spreadsheet helped me identify the most important themes emerging from the data.

I did not, however, organize my findings according to themes. Such approach would not have enabled me to capture ambivalences and ambiguities entrenched in the observed practices across different settings. In order not to lose these complex meanings of each of the respondents' experiences, I organised my data by individual respondent, which later became the basis for individual biographic chapters. By grouping my data by individuals, as opposed to themes, I was able to illustrate the complexity and ambivalence of their lived experiences of diversity. This strategy engages the reader with the intricacies and inconsistencies of the respondents' everyday lives. It helps the reader to get to know my participants and to understand the context of the complexities of their lived diversities. There are, of course, prevalent themes in my findings, identified in each chapter and followed throughout. I return to these themes in chapter 14 where the in-depth knowledge of the ten individuals is linked back with the academic discussions on everyday lived diversities and where my contributions are emphasized. Without treating these biographic chapters as isolated stories, I situate these individual and complex experiences within a

broader national context shaping lived diversities. I believe that the structure of my empirical chapters is crucial in capturing both micro and macro contexts of everyday negotiations of difference.

## Translations

I transcribed interviews in Polish. The transcription stage was already the beginning of my data analysis process. Fieldnotes were written predominantly in English unless words or phrases could not be translated directly. Gawlewicz (2016b) in her research on Polish migrants and encounters with difference pointed out the numerous challenges of native researchers involved in translating data. As she noted, it is not merely a linguistic task, but also a question of obligation and ethics in how we represent our respondents and how we construct meanings. The difficulty with translating the language of difference, i.e. describing ethnic or racial minorities, is that there are words that do not have equivalents in English, and so when translated literally, they lose their meanings or become subject to misinterpretation. I followed a similar approach to Gawlewicz in trying to ensure that the meanings of these expressions are kept in the original as much as possible. When I faced difficulty translating phrases in a non-ambiguous way, I included the original Polish for transparency. Gawlewicz (2016b) further claimed that sometimes racialized vocabulary can be used without racist intentions, and it is important to understand the context behind peoples' choices of words. While I observed similar narratives, I also noticed contrasting strategies, e.g. my respondents used neutral terms with negative intentions, which was conveyed in their tone of voice and the broader context of the interaction. This was most noticeable at the beginning of the fieldwork when my participants were cautious about naming others and thus tended toward politically correct vocabulary. Whenever the meaning of the words they used was ambivalent, I attempted to present the context to capture intentions behind spoken words.

There are a few words which cannot be translated literally. I briefly explain their meanings below and clarify how I use them throughout the empirical chapters.

### *Murzyn*

This is an ambiguous term. It refers to a black person and can be translated as either 'a Black(man)' [*sic*], 'a person of African/Caribbean descent' or 'Negro' (Polish–English PWN-Oxford Dictionary 2004, cited in Gawlewicz, 2016b: 37). It comes from the Latin word *maurus* and has been used in Polish since the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Boryś, 2005). The word *Murzyn* is perceived by the majority of Poles (68%) as non-offensive (CBOS, 2007). However, it has been suggested that many black people living in Poland find it racist (Tymowski, 2010). There are idioms and folk sayings that use *Murzyn* in a derogatory way, referring to slaves and implying laziness and backwardness. These sorts of

connotations are linked to Western colonialism and have been reinforced in popular culture (Moskalewicz, 2005, Ząbek, 2007). While personally I find the term discriminatory and offensive, I recognize that it can still be used by some people in a neutral way. It was impossible for me to always capture my respondents' intentions. I decided to translate the word *Murzyn* into 'black person', and I use this term consistently throughout my empirical chapters.

#### *Ciapaty/ciapak*

This is a neologism in Polish created following the encounters of post-accession Polish migrants in the UK with the UK's Asian population. It is used for anyone who is neither white nor black (Nowicka, 2017: 7). Sometimes Poles use it to refer to South Asian people, but others include people from the Middle East also. Rzepnikowska (2016b) argues that the term is an example of Orientalist discourse. It is also a racist term, created on the basis of skin colour, but not fitting easily into a white/black dichotomy. Most likely the term originates from chapatti bread. However, I have come across many Poles who are unaware of its origins but connect it to the Polish word *ciapki* (patches). This reference is supposed to describe the neither white nor black skin colour of the people they attached the label to.

#### *Kolorowy/kolorowo*

These terms can be translated as either 'colourful' or 'coloured'. While the latter has offensive connotations in English, the former appears to have a positive undertone. In Polish *kolorowy* (adjective) and *kolorowo* (adverb) seem to be more neutral. I have only come across it once in the literature on Poles in Britain (Rzepnikowska 2016b: 8). My view is the term is more ambiguous. Describing black people as coloured in British immigration control policies in the early/mid twentieth century (Solomos, 2003) proved that racial terms used in political contexts are never neutral (Modood, 1988). Thus, it is important to acknowledge the historically negative connotations the Polish language borrows from. I decided to use both 'colourful' and 'coloured' to translate *kolorowy/kolorowo* to capture its ambivalent meaning.

#### Choosing Bristol as a research site

I selected Bristol as a site for my data collection for a number of reasons; the familiarity of the city, a large population of post-accession Polish citizens and Bristol's ethnic and religious diversity.

I have lived in Bristol since the start of my PhD course and had familiarised myself with both the city's areas and the institutional (i.e. media, church, Polish business) presence of the Polish community. I chose to conduct my fieldwork in Bristol because the familiarity with the local context helped me understand the social settings and geographical areas I visited with my respondents.

This local knowledge helped me establish networks and access gatekeepers prior to the start of the fieldwork. The previously established contacts and understandings of local culture and socio-spatial divisions enabled me to recruit participants with selected criteria and ensure that they live in and visit demographically varied neighbourhoods. The nature of my methodological approach required a large time commitment and was labour-intensive. Living in Bristol increased my availability, allowed me to be more flexible and arrange field work observations at short notice, sometimes on the same day.

According to the 2011 census, there were 6,080 Polish speakers (and 6,415 Polish-born people) living in Bristol, constituting 1.5% of the total city population compared to 1% nationwide (Jabłonowski and Piotrowska, 2013). Polish language is the second main language spoken in Bristol and this reflects national trends (Bristol City Council, 2017: 32). The Polish community is strongly established with developed social networks and a visible presence in the city through a number of Polish businesses and institutions (such as shops, enterprises, community radio, a website, a school, etc) and the activity of the Polish Church of our Lady of Ostrobrama (White, 2010: 184). Two-thirds of Poles in Bristol, who were registered under the Worker's Registration Scheme between 2004 and 2011, were employed in low-skilled jobs: workers at factories, the hospitality and construction sectors, and care services (Jabłonowski and Piotrowska, 2013). Most of them were between 18 and 34. The young age of newcomers and their employment status in the low-skilled labour market sectors resemble the profile of Poles nationwide (Okólski and Salt, 2014: 21-22).

Poles settling in Bristol join an already diverse population. The Black or Minority Ethnic group (BME) constitutes 16% of all Bristolians, with the majority coming from Africa, Pakistan, the Caribbean, India and China (Bristol City Council, 2017). After Birmingham, and Brent and Ealing, Bristol has the fourth largest concentration of Somali-born residents, estimated at almost 5,000 (Bristol-City-Council, 2017: 29).<sup>7</sup> Bristol is home to people from fifty different countries, with 15% of Bristolians born outside the UK. Forty five religions are represented in the city with Christianity being the largest (47%), followed by Islam (5.1%), Buddhism, Hinduism (0.6% each) and Sikhism (0.5%). The economic and ethnic diversity is not dispersed equally amongst all neighbourhoods, with some areas in the suburbs predominantly consisting of white working class British Christians, while others, closer to the city centre are more diverse, with two thirds of Lawrence Hill's residents belonging to Black and Minority Ethnic groups, and one third being Muslim, compared to 5.1% average for the whole city (Bristol City Council, 2017).

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<sup>7</sup> According to official estimates there are around 3,000 Somalis born in the UK which gives the total number of Somali minority of just over 8,000 (Bristol City Council, 2017: 25).

Bristol's image is liberal and progressive, i.e. celebrating multicultural difference, and being a popular tourist destination with annual festivals and street art, ethical businesses, environmentally friendly developments, and investment in the local economy with its own currency, the Bristol pound. However, this public imaginary of Bristol conceals growing wealth disparities. Bristol is 'a tale of two cities', with growing socio-economic disparities amongst its residents masked by 'the gentrification of progressive politics', according to Bristol's current mayor, Marvin Rees (Goff and Laurence, 2017: 23). Migrants employed in the low-skilled sector of the local economy and who tend to settle in less affluent areas are similarly impacted by these trends. Ethnic and class divisions are spatially demarcated. The Avon and Somerset police has noted an increase in the number of racially motivated hate crimes over the years, with a spike in violence observed directly after Brexit.<sup>8</sup> Poles settling in Bristol are exposed to both the liberal movement as well as to economic inequalities and discrimination.

### Reflexive research: managing proximity and distance

The research process from design through fieldwork and data analysis and writing up was driven by reflexivity about my own position, interests in the research subject, and personal link with the topic that resulted from my own experiences. I was conscious about my own role in producing knowledge. During the data collection I was aware that my personal experiences and the relationships I had developed with my participants may have had an impact on my data collection and analysis. I kept a separate reflexive diary to record my feelings, judgements as well as any assumptions associated with the practices I had observed. I believe it helped me to reflect on my position as a researcher and recognize how my interpretation of data is partially shaped by my own experiences during the research process.

I recognize that I present my ethnographic findings as a kind of narrative form, i.e. through '(...) the use of literary forms that in some sense tell a story' (Davies, 1999: 280). I agree with O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994: 28) that engaging in the reflexive process in all stages of rigorously conducted research results in producing a more objective knowledge than the positivistic approach that makes claims about objective truth. In this section I reflect on my own position in the research process and discuss its implications for the research design.

### Beyond insider/outsider status

Rather than positioning myself within the insider/outsider dichotomy, I follow the recommendations of Carling et al. (2014) and take into account two dimensions – credibility and

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/media/25255076/foi-1212-16.pdf>

approachability – in assessing the challenges of access to my participants as well as data collection and analysis. Overall, my credibility, based on my status as a University of Bristol PhD student was useful when I had to gain access to my respondents' workplaces and had to contact their managers to confirm my identity. However, it did not help me with accessing Poles. Gaining access and then building a rapport with my participants was successful because I was recommended to them by their friends or acquaintances. This was how I gained their interest in the research and it's also how I managed to recruit most of them. Speaking Polish was, of course, crucial in my ability to conduct the multi-sited observation, and also to recruit Poles with a low level of English language skills. However, my national identity was not a sufficient incentive in itself to successfully recruit people for my fieldwork. I would describe my position as occupying 'the space between' the insider and outsider status (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

Nonetheless, my Polish identity did help me in other ways. My research method required a lot of trust, and this was partially gained by being seen as one of 'us'. The respondents used phrases such as 'you know, back home...' or 'you know what I mean, right?', assuming I would share the same background knowledge and cultural values. I recognize that I had had similar experiences, having arrived in the UK as an economic migrant in 2005 and having worked in a low skilled job until I had gained a Master's degree. Often, I could relate to their stories by saying 'I have been through something similar'. I gained more trust and encouraged them to feel more comfortable with me. However, building trust did not happen with just one encounter. The bond developed over time as we got to know each other. Usually, I would recognize a change in their approach towards me, typically after around the third encounter. The first few meetings could sometimes be uncomfortable for them, and therefore, for me as well. Thus, the encounters required me to pay a good deal of attention to their reactions to my presence and to respond to them intuitively. In order not to cause any distress, I would make sure to maintain a certain social distance, giving them physical space in the first couple of meetings. I had to adjust my interactions with them to whatever they felt comfortable with. And this varied depending on both the individual and the setting.

These adjustments did not come without difficulties. I followed my participants to various places, meeting their acquaintances, families, and friends, which on a personal level was emotionally and mentally demanding as it could challenge some of my own deeply-held values and sensibilities. A few times I felt vulnerable as a woman, especially when accompanying male respondents in social situations where most or all of their male friends were present. Other times, I realised my status privilege when I was uncomfortable observing them in workplaces where they did physical labour, or when visiting their homes and realising their financial struggles. I found it challenging to listen to some of their stories, finding out about financial hardships, personal family problems and



discrimination or everyday racism they experienced. On the other hand, I was upset when hearing racist jokes or being expected to participate in racist banter.

Even though the advantage of my method is to observe my respondents *in situ*, I was aware of a degree of performance enacted by my participants that may have altered their practices. I also do not claim that the direct participation allowed me to observe more natural behaviour than other qualitative methods (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Nevertheless, the more time I spent with them, the more trust was invested in me and the less purposively performative their actions were. I try to reflect on the possible impact of my presence on their behaviour in my empirical chapters. What the method enabled me to understand better was my participants' subjective perceptions of spaces and people within them, which I was able to link with their status, values and biographies. I managed to capture it regardless of the level of their performance *for me*. This was an important aspect of my research since I could observe how the narratives and practices of each individual changed depending on social settings and people they interacted with.

### Acknowledging the privilege

I developed friendships with most of my participants and I found those friendships difficult when I analysed their racist or xenophobic discourses or practices. Having come across racist behaviour, I faced the dilemma whether I should challenge or condemn it. Islam (2000: 51), who faced similar challenges in her study, decided to remain silent about her anti-racist standpoint so as to avoid influencing the behaviour she observed or alienating the respondents expressing such views. I used the same strategy even though sometimes these views were deeply upsetting to me, especially because of the personal relationship I developed with my participants. I had similar experiences when I analysed the data. The challenge in presenting participants lay in not vilifying them as racist if racism was reported. In the current post-Brexit political climate with migrants and minorities being more vulnerable and exposed to discrimination I felt apprehensive about possible misinterpretations of my findings to claim that Poles *are* racist. I believe that as a researcher I have an ethical responsibility to report on the racist practices I observed since they are a part of everyday lived diversities. However, I contextualise these (and indeed other) practices as situated within a certain social, historical, political and economic framework in which Poles settled and in which they experience diversity. It is worth stressing that I applied the same approach to all strategies observed, not only the racialized or racist practices. This allowed me to look at their experiences as contingent. I interpret their practices as encounters that are contingent upon social space, power relations, histories, and racial hierarchies embedded in peoples' everyday practices

When I started my fieldwork, I did not consider myself as an insider since I had to re-enter a Polish community that I did not consider myself a part of. Thus, I do not argue that I am in a privileged position to answer my research questions more accurately than researchers from the 'outside', who have not had similar experiences to mine. I am also not trying to suggest that I am representing the unheard voice of the Polish community in the UK. With this research I am not trying to talk for Poles. I am merely indicating the ways in which my subjective experiences will affect my understanding of Poles' actions. Following other ethnographers (Back, 1996, Tsuda, 2003), I ask readers to interpret the results from a researcher's social identities perspective, in this case - Polish and female.

My research topic required a sensitive approach to data collection and implied a number of ethical considerations for both participants and researcher. As I gathered confidential information about my participants' perceptions and daily practices, I needed to make sure that I was compliant with the University's ethical procedures driven by the BSA guidelines so that their identities were protected and confidential. I used fictional names and did not reveal the neighbourhoods where my participants lived and worked. I also slightly amended certain demographic information (such as family, work) to ensure confidentiality.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reflected upon and elaborated on my research process, including the epistemological and methodological framework for studying Poles' everyday encounters. I discussed my purpose-built data collection method, the multi-sited observation of individuals, and I justified the need for this approach to gain more insight into negotiations of difference in peoples' everyday lives. I stressed the importance of my method in terms of providing crucial context to the encounters, i.e. individuals' subjective understanding of space, the contingency of their encounters, and their narratives about them, all revealing the process of learning to live with diversity. This chapter also discussed some of the challenges of co-ethnic research, including translations and ambiguous insider/outsider status.

Having reflected on my methodology, in the next empirical chapters I explore my findings and discuss everyday encounters with difference as experienced by my participants. These are examined in separate chapters for each respondent and offer in-depth contextual analysis which allows me to explore the ambivalences and nuances of their practices linked with current discussions of the everyday multiculturalism literature.

I ordered the individual chapters according to the length of stay in Britain of my participants, starting from the shortest time of settlement. This structure allows me to demonstrate the

differences in the process of learning to live with diversity between people who are at the beginning of their migration journey and those who feel more settled in Britain. As I explore, the everyday negotiations of difference vary depending on the participants' perceived status in Britain. Those who just arrived are less familiar with its multiculturalism. They rely stronger on the knowledge from the Polish social networks and are more likely to apply their understandings of racial, ethnic and religious difference from the Polish context to everyday lived experiences. However, over time they learn about diversity through their own quotidian practices in Britain and negotiate their social identity in the diverse British space while trying to improve their socio-economic status. Thus, this order of the chapters enables me to demonstrate that living with diversity is a complex and ongoing process that is shaped less so by common ethnic identity than by individual experiences in different stages of migration.

The first five chapters explore lived diversities of participants who have been in Britain for less than three years. The detailed portraits illustrate that all individuals have unique and complex experiences of lived diversities, however, there are common themes across them. Firstly, they all invest efforts in explicit strategies of fitting into British multicultural society. The newly encountered racial ethnic and religious differences in British context are not unnoticed and they often express negative views about certain minorities. However, they follow urban civility in public places, even around people they are prejudiced towards. They act in civil manners accordingly to perceived norms because they want to feel as belonging to British community. Secondly, they are more likely to express crude forms of racisms than participants who have lived in Britain for many years. The shock of encountering new ethnic, racial, and religious minorities is often expressed by racist discourses, usually directed towards abstract categories of black or Muslim people, that are ill-defined in British context but that reflects the novelty of encountered differences. Finally, this group of respondents makes claims about experienced racism practices from British people more openly than more established migrants. Lack of English language or knowledge of the norms and regulations as well as the nature of the low or unskilled jobs they undertake, are perceived by them as factors contributing towards discriminatory treatment.

I start the first five chapters with Adam's story, in which I focus on his understandings of British society reflected in on-going attempts to conceal his Polish identity and become equal to white English majority. Similar practices of fitting in are expressed by Paulina (chapter 8) and to a lesser extent by Tomek (chapter 6) whose main strategy for 'not sticking out' is to suppress his racist opinions in public. While all three participants expressed perceived racism from the British majority on an interpersonal level, Simon (chapter 5) and Kasia (chapter 7) referred to broader discriminatory practices towards Poles at their workplaces when reflecting on their relations with

the British majority. Simon experienced predominantly positive encounters with cultural others, while Kasia, due to lack of English language skills, had a very limited contact with non-Polish people.

The other five chapters investigate everyday encounters with difference amongst respondents who have lived in Britain for between eight to ten years. As I argue, these participants have more nuanced knowledge of the British diversity that is expressed in complex strategies of negotiating difference. The awareness of Poles' inferior status in Britain is expressed through more implicit strategies of integration into society, juxtaposed with migrants and minorities who supposedly are not willing to integrate. The racialization practices reflect their understandings of racial, ethnic, religious and cultural differences that are influenced by the British racialized hierarchies of belonging. Racism from British people is more likely to be denied, as one of the strategies of fitting in with the majority. And the civil diversity often reflects indifference, i.e. lack of attention to already familiar others, encountered in mundane practices. These more nuanced strategies relate to the perceived improvement of the socio-economic status that my participants had achieved over the years.

Ewa, who is a subject of my sixth portrait, expressed practices of exclusion of Muslim minorities of colour in order to position herself closer to white British people. However, her everyday practices of maintaining Polish identity through tight social networks and limited contact with cultural others, contradicted her claims of being one of 'them', i.e. the English majority. Marcin (chapter 10) negotiated his identity by crude forms of racism towards black and Muslim people and, the more nuanced in British context, racialization of refugees. Similarly to Ewa, he emphasized his belonging by drawing on his white Christian Europeaness. Monika (chapter 11), on the other hand, condemned the crude type of racism manifested by Marcin, expressing her understanding of British multicultural society by being tolerant towards people of colour. Nonetheless, class identity seemed to be more important than 'race' or ethnicity in defining British identity she aspired to. Daniel (chapter 12) and Anna (chapter 13) appeared to have embraced multicultural society by building friendships and relationships across cultural and religious differences, more so than the other three respondents. They were the two participants with strongest networks outside the Polish community, whose intimate relationships with cultural others were met with social ostracism from Polish families and friends. However, the ease with which they connected across racial ethnic and religious boundaries did not stop them from racializing other groups based on their religious or ethnic backgrounds.

There are themes threading through stories of all my respondents. Although their everyday lived diversities are experienced in various ways, what they have in common is the ongoing negotiation

of their ambivalent status as white Christian Europeans on the one hand, and racialized East Europeans on the other. This is evident in their host/guest discourse that they reproduce when reflecting on their position in Britain. This issue is discussed in depth in the final chapter, following the ten portraits.

## 4 Adam – practices of belonging to the white British majority

‘An elderly lady arrived [at the hotel] (...) she arrived and checked in. She was nice, the conversation was nice. I walked her to her room because she asked me to help her with her luggage. In the room she asked me where I was from. I asked her what her first guess would be, the impression she has, and she said Italian. (...) I then told her I was from Poland. And she said: “Oh! Poland! There are so many Poles coming here and stealing jobs from British people.” For me it was like a slap in my face. I gently smiled and told her “After five years of studying for my Bachelor and Master’s degrees, then one more year of postgraduate studies and eight years of work experience in this business I have decided to move to Britain”. This is what I told her. And I think that she realized soon that it had hurt me what she’d said. But I think this was the only moment when I was upset, when someone made me feel that I’m Polish (...) I’m aware that British people are racist.’

Exit interview, February 2016

This incident occurred within Adam’s first eight months of living and working in Britain. The statement that ‘British people are racist’ suggests that he interpreted the woman’s behaviour as racist. It made him feel humiliated. It undermined his identity as an equal citizen, which he tried to realize through work, and which he perceived as ‘the primary duty of the “good” citizen’ (Patrick, 2012: 5). Adam tried to reconcile his position by emphasizing his educational background and work experience, proving to the woman that he is a worthy newcomer. He claimed that she had realized the harm she had caused, which reassured him that he was right. The incident demonstrates that Adam was forced in his everyday life to negotiate various understandings of his social identities as a worker, migrant and EU citizen in the British context.

Throughout this chapter I argue that Adam’s lived diversities reflected his conscious efforts to belong to British society understood as white English and tolerant towards minorities of colour. He was caught in the entanglement of his identities as a Polish economic migrant and European citizen with a performed Britishness. These processes unravelled in the face of the contradictions and tensions he experienced in his everyday life, and which he attempted to understand and overcome. Adam’s encounters with others manifested his ‘presentation of self’ (Goffman, 1971a) as a good British citizen, learnt while settling in Bristol and intertwined with his perceptions of difference acquired in Poland. As a newly arrived economic immigrant he did not seem to reflect on his low socio-economic class as negatively impacting his position in society. He imagined good citizen in racial terms as white British and seemed to interpret his own white identity as an asset.

## Performing citizenship

When I started my fieldwork with Adam, he had been in Bristol for only three months. I conducted the final interview with him six months later. As a new migrant he was appreciative of the job opportunities he had and the help he had received from his friends to settle in Bristol. Paulina, who is another of my respondents (see chapter 8), and her husband, Lukas, had helped Adam and his girlfriend, Patrycja, move to Bristol. They lived in the same house and Paulina also helped Patrycja find a job in the same café she worked in. Adam was grateful for their support and emphasized a number of times that even though he had savings for the new start and spoke fluent English, moving to Britain without their help would have been much more challenging in terms of looking for jobs and accommodation without previous experience, a National Insurance number, a British address or a phone number. Despite his cultural capital, he relied on pre-established social networks with Polish friends who guided him at the beginning of his migration journey. Nevertheless, he managed to find a job by himself. He did not want to do any physical labour and spent a couple of months searching for a job in the hospitality sector, since he had experience of working in a hotel back in Poland. Eventually he found a position as a receptionist in a newly opened hotel in the city centre, which he was proud of and considered a great achievement. He had worked very hard since starting the job. He appreciated the relatively high income compared to salaries in Poland and was astonished at the easy lifestyle in Bristol compared to his financial struggles back home. As he described it to me in the initial interview:

‘This country [Poland] has given me nothing. (...), this country did not prepare me for adult life, so that I don’t have to worry about surviving from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, that I won’t be able to buy bread, or other things. I look at it this way: I don’t need some expensive car or very expensive clothes, or an extravagant lifestyle. I just want to be able to pay rent, buy food, save some money so I can afford little pleasures. For example, today I bought a pair of shoes, I just wanted to treat myself. In Poland I wouldn’t have been able to do it [pause]. Patrycja studied architecture for nine years, I was studying for six years. She couldn’t find a job, me neither. Everywhere you need to know someone or someone you know needs to recommend you. Otherwise you won’t find a job.’

First interview, August 2015

He further explained how the feeling of frustration had grown in him and how insecure he had felt about his and his girlfriend’s future. Contrasting the years of financial hardship in Poland with a few months of living in Bristol, he was amazed how quickly he had found a job in a foreign language and

without any contacts in the industry. The salary, even though close to the minimum wage, was more gratifying and he was already able to afford a better quality of life than after years of working in Poland. This may explain his passion and enthusiasm for his work. He was willing to go the extra mile because he felt appreciated and rewarded for his efforts. He started considering staying in Britain indefinitely, even though he had originally planned to migrate temporarily. Following Anderson's analysis of East European EU workers (2013: 83), Adam, as an economic 'migrant', is a 'Piorean', a 'true economic man', who is willing to accept his lower social status and low-skilled job for better pay than he would have received back in Poland. Due to being new in the British labour market he had a limited understanding of the industry and was fairly satisfied with the higher wage compared to his earnings back home. He treated his job as a temporary stage that would help him learn skills, improve his English and develop his career.

During the fieldwork I realised that his gratitude towards British society was targeted at a particular section of the British population, i.e. the white British majority. The incident I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, in which Adam felt he had experienced racism from a white British person, illustrates the contingent relationship Adam had with the British majority. He felt that he had been treated unfairly due to his nationality. However, he believed that his difference, conveyed by his accent, could be erased in time. He consciously worked on becoming similar and seemed to feel responsible for occasionally 'sticking out':

'I would like to have this beautiful English accent, but I know I need a few years to pick it up. I'm afraid I rather have this kind of American mumbling. But I'm trying to move away from it, I'm trying to listen to how British people talk and I'm trying to imitate them (...) Apart from that I have asked my colleagues at work to correct me.'

First interview, August 2015

Adam wanted to be invisible. He seemed to perceive his accent as an obstacle to integrating with the white British majority. It betrayed his background and made it more difficult to blend in. Shared whiteness did not guarantee him equal status (Garner, 2007). His accent was an embodied difference (Rzepnikowska, 2016b: 10) that he was convinced he could conceal overtime. Through many more or less conscious strategies he attempted to align himself with the British majority. One of the other implicit practices he engaged in was to invest in discourses of Europeaness and paid work, which he used to describe his position in Britain:

'You know, I will always be an immigrant. But I'm a European citizen, I want to be a European citizen but not an immigrant (...) As I've already told you, if someone comes



here and works hard then it's fine, but if someone is here just to use benefits, like some Poles I see, who sit and drink under the bridge, then it's not ok (...) Whenever we see them and have to walk past them I tell Patrycja to switch to English and pretend we are not Polish and can't understand them.'

First interview, August 2015

He discursively distanced himself from the perceived problematic Other and emphasized commonalities between himself and the British population, through shared Europeaness, English language competency and hard work, all components of his perceived good citizenship. These were expectations he wanted to fulfil. The construction of a desirable type of migrant by immigration policies (Anderson, 2017) resonated with his understandings of his own situation and made him want to be compliant with popular perceptions of the good immigrant as an economic contributor to rather than burden on Britain. Thus, describing himself as 'a European rather than migrant', and practising a British accent to conceal his national identity, were symbolic strategies to integrate into British society and avoid the pejorative connotations associated with 'a migrancy problematic' (Gilroy, 2004: 165).

The effort of distancing himself from a marginalised category was expressed in a number of other strategies. Adam was aware of his vulnerable status as a newcomer, not only because he faced the pejorative label of immigrant, but also because he had little knowledge of the new culture and saw this as a disadvantage. He tried to fast-track the adjustment period in order not to be exposed as a novice. Thus, he tried to reconcile the feeling of anxiety caused by the process of learning a new culture by searching for reaffirmation from British people that he was seen as 'one of us', as the example below illustrates:

'Today I couldn't communicate with a guy in a shoe shop. Basically, they didn't have my size and I wanted him to order it for me, so I can collect them another time. He didn't understand me at first but then he did, and we got on fine. And I told him: "Sorry that I don't speak English very well and that you couldn't understand me". But he said, "No problem!" Then he asked me where I was from. I said from Poland and he said "oh, OK". It was simply OK, he didn't move away or anything, it was OK for him. (...) I think that admitting to a mistake and saying sorry I'm trying to improve my English but I don't always get it right...I think British people understand it, or people here understand it (...) At the end when I paid he even gave me a voucher to log in to their website and take part in a prize draw. Then I shook his hand, and I saw that it made

him content. It was nice, I think [short pause] I felt accepted. I simply feel here as an accepted human being.'

First interview, August 2015

The above quotes suggest that the responsibility of successful integration was perceived to be on his side since as a guest in Britain he needed to learn the correct codes of practice and adjust accordingly. Misunderstandings exposed Adam as the Other and caused anxieties. Learning the culture through everyday experiences was a part of adjusting to a new society although faux pas occurred despite his proficiency in the language. Goffman (1971a), comparing everyday life to a theatrical performance, pointed out that social gaffs disrupt a person's enacted social role and risk destroying the good image they may have built in the perceptions of their audience – the people they interact with. Indeed, Adam was embarrassed by the fact he had difficulties to communicate with the shop assistant, who represented the white British audience Adam was trying to impress with his newly learnt British behaviour. He struggled to explain to the man what he wanted and blamed himself for the miscommunication. He was apologetic and tried to rectify his mistake by justifying it as due to poor language skills, which was not an accurate judgement of his fluent English. By saying this, however, he drew the attention of the shop assistant to his nationality. By putting so much effort into being similar, he paradoxically pointed out his difference. He seemed to have expected a negative reaction from the shop assistant and was relieved when he turned out to be indifferent. Adam applied certain practices in order to save the performance from becoming a fiasco. He presented himself as an honourable person who self-confessed *his* mistake and who reassured the British shop assistant, his audience, that he was doing his best to be the way he thought British people wanted him to be.

More importantly, this spectacle of performed Britishness revealed the unequal power relations between him and the white British. His reflection on the incident showed that being categorized as a Polish migrant created feelings of angst and inferiority. Apologizing for the misunderstanding drew attention to him which was counter-productive to what he was attempting to achieve, that is, to be unnoticeable. The question 'where are you from?' induced an uncomfortable feeling and further reinforced the hierarchy between them. It forced Adam to reveal his identity and exposed him to the possibility of hostility. Adam tried to reconcile his status by a hand shake which made him feel an equal and a worthy citizen again.

His various practices of enacting 'Britishness' illustrate the vulnerability of new immigrants who want to do well in the new context and their attempts to overcome the challenges of being perceived as Other. Adam's goal was to be accepted but he perceived his national identity as a

shortcoming and an obstacle to integrating. The characterisation of Poles in the media and popular discourses as stealing jobs (Spigelman, 2013) resonated strongly with Adam and was internalised in his anxiety about being seen as inferior. This manifested itself in the complex process of construction of his Polish identity. The politically salient boundaries (Wimmer, 2008) of a Polish newcomer as a threat to the British labour market was internalized as an ascribed group identity (Jenkins, 1994) within the British context that values whiteness, individualism and hard work. Invisibility was the desired goal since it would allow him to evade the stigma associated with Polish people in public discourses in Britain (Spigelman, 2013). Nevertheless, achieving it in the first few months of the migration journey was not without difficulties. As a novice in Britain, Adam was still learning the prevalent norms and was not always able to adhere to prevailing codes of conduct.

### Learning to live with diversity

Adam was keen to learn from others about what constituted appropriate behaviour. His Polish friends, Paulina and Lukas, who he lived with, were significant sources of advice in teaching Adam about British norms and expectations. They had lived in Britain for just over two years upon Adam's arrival and had shared their knowledge about British society with him and his girlfriend, who had arrived three months before him. One of the insights they shared was about being tolerant towards diversity, as the extract below from the initial interview shows:

Magda

You mentioned earlier that you had problems with your Jewish boss back in Poland and that you used to be racist but you are not anymore. Has this changed since you've been here?

Adam

It has changed since I've been here, yes (...) I will tell you this: very often I happened to say: *kolorowy* [colourful/coloured], black, dirty, *ciapaty*. I'm ashamed of it. My family, who now lives in Norway, is very racist, perhaps I got it from them? But since I've been here [pause] OK: *white-skinned, black-skinned, dark-skinned* [neutral terms in Polish], I think this is normal. But I don't say [with a quieter voice] *nigger* [in English] because it's not nice. Why? Because here there is a lot of pressure for tolerance. You don't have it in Poland. Here, there is a strong pressure on fighting racism.

Magda

How did you realise it?

Adam

You know, Patrycja [his girlfriend] made me realise that I was a racist. She told me: "Adam, you have to work on this." So overall, I had to work on myself. In other words, a person who had been here longer than me told me that I need to improve something (...) and then I soon realised it myself. Everywhere there are different people. Everyone has the right to be here because we are in the European Union. (...) At the end of the day, someone warned me, knew I had a problem with it. Patrycja did it because someone else [Paulina and Lukas as he confirmed later] had pointed it out to her when she first arrived. She had been told that here we have tolerance, there are many ethnic groups and you know, you can't offend anyone at work'

Exit interview, February 2016

Adam claimed that he had learnt an important lesson about himself. Learning to live with diversity was, as he claimed, based on a conscious effort to change his perceptions about racial and ethnic others. He believed that he had become tolerant since moving to Bristol. He reflected openly on his racist opinion about his former Jewish manager and use of racist slurs to describe people of colour. He stated he was ashamed of them and recognised that his short experience of living in diverse Britain had changed him for the better. His racist attitudes were in the past, he claimed. This transformation in his perceptions had been possible with the help of his Polish friends and his partner who had taught him what the appropriate code of conduct towards people of colour was. He took on board their comments because he trusted that their knowledge was gained from a longer experience of living in Britain. He expressed a newly learnt way of appreciating diversity through the conscious use of the language of respect (Gawlewicz, 2015a). He manifested knowledge of what an acceptable language of difference in English was and he translated it into Polish neutral words to describe people of colour. He claimed to have stopped using racist language such as 'coloured' or 'nigger' and started using terms, perceived as neutral in Polish, such as white-skinned or black-skinned.

Furthermore, his appreciation of a diverse Britain was also demonstrated in his everyday practices in his neighbourhood. As I describe in the chapter on Paulina, the area in which they lived is one of the most diverse areas in Bristol in racial, ethnic and religious terms. It is also socially and economically deprived, although recently it has been undergoing a slow process of gentrification. The streetscape is not aesthetically pleasant, with significant social housing, demolished or abandoned buildings. At the same time, the main shopping street, located a five-minute walk from Adam's house, thrives with local community life. The shops, restaurants and local services are run by migrants and minorities with ethnic minority food stores and international restaurants. Adam

assured me a few times that he enjoyed the vibrant and diverse life in the area. On one occasion I accompanied him to a local barber shop. On our way we walked past the local services and he showed me his favourite food shop, butcher's and bakery, all run by minorities. He told me that people there were very friendly, they recognised him and always chatted to him. He felt that he was part of a kind friendly and helpful community.

We arrived at the barber's, just around the corner from the shopping street. The barber was Moroccan. Adam had used his services a few times now and the man recognized him. They were friendly to each other but did not engage in a conversation other than in a polite exchange of a few phrases. After we had left the shop, Adam contently announced:

'You see, he is very good! Did you notice that I didn't even have to explain what kind of haircut I wanted? And he knows me now and we start developing a very good relation. He knows me and knows what I like. And I will be coming back every three weeks and it's important to have this relation. And I would ask 'how are you?', he would ask how my day was. We have a friendly chat. It's nice.'

Field notes, October 2015

Adam was very happy with the interaction, claiming that he was developing good relations with the barber. In his final interview a couple of months later he mentioned the barber again when giving an example of his appreciation of diversity in his everyday life. He seemed to genuinely enjoy his encounters with some minorities with whom he would never have interacted back in Poland. I realised it was important to him to be perceived as belonging to the local community. Engaging in convivial practices in commercial spaces with local people made him feel like an included member of the area. The awareness he had about the necessity to develop good relations, to be polite in shops and engage in chit-chat, demonstrated his performativity as a good citizen, a respectable neighbour in a diverse environment. His appreciation of everyday multiculturalism stemmed from his willingness to fit in with society. He proactively tried to understand prevailing societal norms, such as public disapproval of overt racism, and proclaimed tolerance towards minorities of colour. His self-reflection on his past racist attitudes, stated without hesitation, expressed a conviction that he had changed and overcome his personal racism and prejudice, which he demonstrated in his everyday interactions with local services. Adam comprehended multiculturalism in Britain as the British majority tolerating the presence of racial and ethnic minorities and he believed that people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds co-existed together peacefully. He was willing to demonstrate his tolerant approach by making sure that he did not use offensive language towards

ethnic minorities and by his readiness to interact with them in commercial spaces. The racist attitudes he had had back in Poland were met with reprimand from his Polish friends and he was aware that they could jeopardize his status as a member of British multicultural society.

Even though Adam acknowledged diversity, by applying the tolerance discourse he implicitly pointed to racial status hierarchies in Britain. His tolerant attitude positions Adam in hierarchies of belonging as closer to the British majority due to shared whiteness and being able to also tolerate people of colour (Hage, 1998). Being explicitly racist, as he used to be, would risk being exposed as different and would breach the norms he wanted to be seen as compliant with. As many authors emphasize (Anderson, 2012, Jones et al., 2015, Neal et al., 2015, Wilson, 2011, Wise, 2011, Wessendorf, 2014a), a prevailing norm in public spaces is that of civil inattention (Goffman, 1966) which ostensibly suggests that ethnic difference has become ordinary in everyday lives. Nevertheless, while Adam's mundane practices that I observed in public would never challenge these prevailing norms, they should not be immediately interpreted as Adam's actual indifference towards ethnicity or 'race'. On the contrary, the civility he expressed in the public sphere expressed his awareness of difference and his willingness to follow the prevailing code of conduct of tolerance and celebrating diversity. His interactions with others in the context of the neighbourhood revealed his consciousness of rather than indifference towards difference, which was part of his process of learning to live with diversity.

### Reconciling tensions

Adam's claim that racism was in his past and his appreciation and celebration of diversity described above contradicted his discourses about blackness. I soon realised that there were tensions between what Adam believed was the right thing to do, i.e. follow the code of practice and express multicultural competency, and his perceptions of black masculinity which were manifested in deeply embedded fears of black bodies.

During the initial interview, while describing his everyday routines in his neighbourhood, Adam emphasised his everyday cosmopolitanism, and also made the following comment:

'You know, here [in his neighbourhood] there are black, dark nations. There are drunken mouths, not nice Poles, you can tell it's a bit worse area...once I start my late shifts and finish work at 11pm I won't be walking back on foot, I will be taking a bus. It's just unsafe here at night.'

Magda

Have you ever witnessed any incidents? Do you know if anything bad has happened?

Adam

You know what? You drive past this club and there are so many crowds there. Discotheque, alcohol, drugs, you know...they will see a white man, and they can attack. You know, I don't look badly at anyone here, not at all! But someone can get mad...it's just unpleasant here at night. In the daytime there are no problems. In all those shops the shopkeepers are very nice. Although obviously they would be, I bring money to them. But anyway, in Poland shopkeepers are not as nice...I like living here. I could live here, really. The house we have is nice, clean.'

First interview, August 2015

In the quote above he explicitly expressed his fears of black people. This is not to say that the mix of cultures and nations he 'consumed' every day was not genuinely appreciated by him. However, his enjoyment of diversity was intertwined with cautiousness towards black residents perceived as a powerful and threatening Other (Seidman, 2013). His conviction that his neighbourhood was unsafe at night because of the presence of people of colour demonstrated the anxiety black [implicitly male] bodies cause. He expressed what Fanon called 'Negrophobia'. Black men become a phobogenic object that arouses anxieties and terror on a psychological level since '(...) affect has a priority that defies all rational thinking' (Fanon, 2008: 120). These fears were reflected in Adam's narrative which symbolically created a boundary between Adam, a good citizen, and the black Other, dangerous and threatening. He separated the good from the bad by making a distinction between various settings in his neighbourhood. This binary division between the good, safe and enjoyable commercial sites, where he could celebrate everyday multiculturalism, and the bad, dangerous and criminal ones associated with the night economy, were racialized. The neighbourhood, thriving with positive celebrated diversity during the day, turned into a dark, hazardous and criminal place symbolised by the presence of black bodies at night time. The feeling of comfort and safety was constructed through othering black people in the settings of the night club perceived as unsafe (Held, 2015). Adam would not risk walking in his neighbourhood on his own in the middle of the night when the night clubs were open. His precautious practices of taking public transport, staying safe and away from troublesome black people reflected fears that associate black bodies with crime, delinquency and threat (Hall, 2009). The boundary between himself and black men he discursively created was also manifested on another occasion, when he made the following comment:

'I don't have anything against them [black people], but they can have something against me, against my skin colour. For example, St Paul's is unsafe, that's what I've

heard (...). I was passing it and I could feel them [black males] watching me. When I turned around I realised there were no other white men around.’ [He paused thoughtfully]. ‘You know, there’s tolerance, but there also has to be a principle of limited trust.’

Field notes, September 2015

The threatening masculinity of a black body has been produced by public and political discourses since the 1980s (Alexander, 1996). He called them ‘black nations’, which shows that Britishness and blackness were still imagined to be exclusive (Centre-for-Contemporary-Cultural-Studies, 1982), and reflects a persistent public representation of pathologized black cultures and ways of life as delinquent. He actually claims that he has nothing against *them*. But he is convinced that *they* may have something against him because he is white. He constructed symbolic boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the form of a ‘reverse racism’ discourse (van Dijk, 1992) as justifications for his own fears. Through claims that he had overcome racism and perceived negative experiences with black people, Adam validated his racialised assumptions about black people.

While these perceptions influenced his practices in terms of avoiding certain areas of Bristol and not participating in the night life of his neighbourhood, his everyday interactions with ethnic and racial others followed a civil inattention code of practice and did not express any kind of fear or hatred. I observed Adam in his everyday routines doing food shopping, going to a hairdresser, window shopping in the city centre, in a café and finally, at his workplace. He never showed hostility towards anyone. He was civil with Muslim black women passing us on a street in his neighbourhood. He was polite and friendly with black shop assistants helping him to choose clothing in a shopping mall and did not pay attention to the ethnic or racial diversity of customers in a café in the city centre, hardly realizing other peoples’ presence in these places. In these contexts, where he maintained superficial-level interactions, his perceptions of black people were not manifested. The ‘Negrophobia’ (Fanon, 2008) was activated in social contexts when Adam thought he was a racial minority and this evoked fears. This illustrates the need for exploring understandings of difference shaped by social contexts beyond the commercial spaces of cafes or shopping malls where civility tends to be performed (Anderson, 2012, Jones et al., 2015).

## Conclusion

Adam’s perceptions about diversity and practices with others were ambivalent and manifested in tensions between the beliefs challenged in the new context of experienced lived diversities. His strategies of negotiating difference were different to participants with more established statuses. He tried very hard to blend into British society and did not want to be perceived as either a Polish



citizen or as an economic migrant, both categories negatively racialized in British society. He drew on a shared European identity and wanted to be recognized as such. Preoccupied with his everyday performance as a good citizen through his interactions with British people, he did not seem to be interested in Muslim minorities and did not engage in exclusionary discourses about them or refugees. Such ideas were, however, prevalent amongst those participants who had lived in Britain for many years and whose status was negotiated against the undesirable figure of a Muslim immigrant. Both more settled participants and newcomers aligned themselves with the British majority on the grounds of shared whiteness. They did this by excluding different social groups – Muslims for the former, and black people or stigmatized Poles in Adam's case.

Adam, as a newcomer, was focused on proving that he was a good, desirable citizen. His reputation could be destroyed by being associated with negative perceptions of Polish people, therefore he discursively disassociated himself from them. The Muslim minority was not seen as a threat, too irrelevant to his everyday experiences of inclusion/exclusion and perhaps therefore, absent from his discourses. Black people, however, even though they did not threaten his status, revealed his 'Negrophobic' fears, most likely brought from Poland, and enhanced by the presence of black people in the more deprived and poorer areas where he lived and where he, albeit fleetingly, came across them.

The host/guest discourse revealed his conditional status manifested in tensions between his efforts to do well, perceived racism and negative treatment of Poles. This, however, was not a lived experience of diversity of my next respondent, Simon. Even though he also described himself as a guest, he did not invest efforts in being a good citizen. Treating his migration as temporary his priority was not to belong but to save enough money to leave. Paradoxically, he was a respondent with the most sensitive approach towards other cultures.

## 5 Simon – the absence of ethnic categories in everyday life

I arranged to meet with Simon for his private piano lesson. I arrived at 6:15pm outside his teacher's house as he had requested. His teacher lived in a diverse part of Bristol. While we were locking our bicycles, I briefly surveyed the area. Close by, three white British teenage boys played football, a few black teenagers and black Muslim women walked past. There was a tower block on one side of the house and terrace houses on the other side reaching the end of the street. The lesson was planned for 6:30pm and we had a few minutes to spare. I asked Simon about his hobby. He said he had played piano most of his life and wanted to continue to play it in Bristol:

Magda

And how did you find the teacher?

Simon

I googled piano lessons in Bristol [paused with laughter]. You know, I'm convinced Asians are better at playing the piano, they always win competitions and they are just so good! And I found her, she is from Taiwan and I decided to try. She is fantastic. I don't mind paying extra, I learn so much from her!

At 6.30pm we knocked on her door. She let us in, straight in to the living room where a big piano in the middle of the room took up most of the space. I sat on a sofa opposite Simon and his teacher, by the window that overlooked the street where children still played football. They started the lesson immediately, focusing on the piece of music he had practised, by Sergei Rachmaninoff, a composer he chose (as he later told me). After the class, when we were getting ready to leave, they exchanged a short polite conversation about his work. This is where he went immediately after the class. He wore work clothes to the lesson; black loose-fitting trousers, a grey hoodie, a high-visibility vest and a small rucksack. He was ready for his nightshift at the warehouse.

Field notes, February 2016

Simon did not change his discourses about the teacher after we had left her house. While other respondents often altered their practices with others depending on social context, Simon did not engage in any discussion about her. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, ethnic categories did not define his encounters with others and were absent from his discourses unless he was prompted by me to discuss them. Simon's experiences of living with difference varied and were driven by his ambivalent socio-economic position. Through his interests in piano playing, as well as

contemporary dance and martial arts, he engaged with middle class and ethnically diverse British population. On the other hand, as a dry food picker in a fruit and vegetable warehouse, he interacted with other workers who were predominantly white British working class and other Polish citizens. Being employed in a low-skilled sector also had an impact on his living arrangements. He rented a room in a shared flat with other economic migrants. He earned just above the minimum wage and tried to save as much money as possible. He did not eat out, did not spend time in shopping malls, nor did he use local services such as cafés or shops. He did not drink alcohol and did not go out to pubs or bars. The diversity he learned about in Bristol was not encountered in super-diverse settings or spaces of fleeting encounters. Rather, he engaged with cultural others through his interests as well as at his workplace and the immediate environment of his flat.

Hence, his knowledge about multicultural Britain was built on experiences often overlooked in the literature on everyday multiculturalism that mainly focuses on diverse sites. His learning process of living with diversity occurred mainly outside these social spaces, but he still managed to engage with individuals of various ethnic and religious backgrounds in a meaningful way. These encounters manifest his knowledge gathered through previous experiences with cultural others, which he then applied to the British context and blended with his acquired understanding of British diversity, which I will explore in this chapter.

### Simon's migration story

Simon arrived in Britain at the beginning of 2015, when he was 31. He came with the aim of staying here for two years in order to save money to pay back debts that he had incurred through travelling:

'In the last ten years I visited forty countries, half of Europe but mainly Asia and the Middle East. Most of that time I was without work, I wanted to use the rest of my youth to see the world. I would borrow money from family and friends, go away for a month or two, then come back, work anywhere I could for some time and then go away again. And I lived this way for ten years. (...) It came to a point when I was embarrassed to ask for more money and knew that I had to start paying it all back sooner than later. I had to do something about it. In Poland it is difficult to find a well-paid job. For example, my trip to Mongolia cost me around seven thousand złoty and it would have taken me at least two years to pay it back with the income in Poland. I knew I could earn more money here, although I did not realise how easy it would be to save money! In the first couple of months I saved what I would have in two years back home!'

First interview, August 2015

He travelled to Asia on a motorbike and he met many people on a Polish online bike forum, where he shared pictures from his trips. One man from the forum, Jan, who lived in Bristol with his family, invited Simon and offered to let him stay with them until he found a job. Simon had never met him in person but decided to take up the offer and flew to Bristol in April 2015. He stayed with the man for just over a week. While staying with Jan's family, Simon found a job in a warehouse through a job agency and managed to rent a room in a shared flat. His first workplace was situated about twelve miles away from his flat. To save money, he cycled there and back. He wanted to save petrol money and did not use his motorbike. After a couple of months of eight-hours shifts and two hours of commuting by bicycle a day he was exhausted. Jan's wife recommended another food warehouse to him, where she used to work, located only a few minutes away from his new flat. He went there, left his CV and was offered a permanent contract after just a week of working there. He seemed very appreciative of the work opportunities and earnings he could access in Britain. His salary was slightly higher than the minimum wage and he had still managed to save as well as paying back most of his debts in the first year. He adopted a rather modest life-style in order to do so. He was often allowed to help himself to expired dry food in his workplace, which would otherwise be thrown away. Thus, he spent little money on food shopping.

He rented a room for just £300 a month in a shared flat, mostly with other migrants. The house they stayed in was run-down and shabby. When I visited Simon, we had tea in his room, we did not use the communal area. Simon's room was very small. On the top floor, with a sloped ceiling, there was only space for a bed in the corner, a small table by the window, a few book shelves on one wall, a digital piano and a cupboard by the door. There was a leak in the ceiling and Simon had put a big bucket on the table to catch the water. There was hardly enough space for one person. When one of us needed to stand up, the other had to sit to make some space. The room was dark and felt gloomy with one dark blue wall and the others – in a faded magnolia, looking grey. Simon did not decorate it. The room was very minimalistic with a big cardboard box from his digital piano by the bed, a few books on the shelves and his toiletries on the cupboard. It did not have a homely feeling to it and reflected the temporariness of his planned two year stay in Bristol. Nevertheless, Simon seemed to be happy with the price and location and did not seem to mind poor conditions:

'I was very lucky with this house, it was the first advert I'd found online and responded to. I don't understand why people say it's so difficult to find a place to stay in Bristol. This is a great location, just 15-minute cycle to the city centre. I have a space for my motor bike in the garage. The landlords are great, I have a very good relationship with them. It happened a few times already that I was late with the payment and they were

fine with waiting. And it's so cheap. I will stay here as long as I can, it is a great deal for me'.

Exit interview, March 2016

Simon's workplace and living arrangements reflect the financial hardship many economic migrants face (Castles and Miller, 2008, Fenton, 1999). Cheap, overcrowded housing with poor living conditions, night shifts six days a week for a salary which is slightly above the minimum wage expose the vulnerability of EU citizens and the poverty they often experience when they are at the bottom of the labour market (Anderson et al., 2006, Spencer et al., 2007). However, Simon was satisfied with his work and the conditions of the flat. Having just moved to Bristol, it was his only experience of life in Britain. Focused on financial gain, the work, which gave him greater financial benefits than in Poland, was his main goal in his migration journey. As a 'homo economicus' (Piore, 1979: 54) he was not concerned about his status in the British context since the wage comparison enhanced his status compared to his status back in Poland. With his focus on earning money and paying back his debts, his living arrangements were of secondary importance. His good relationship with his landlord was valued by him more than living standards. Even though socially and economically disadvantaged, Simon interpreted his situation as beneficial and expressed gratitude for the opportunity, a perception common amongst new Polish citizens settling in Britain in the low skilled labour sector, especially those that treat migration as temporary (Eade et al., 2007). Moreover, he unconsciously resisted his marginalized status using his cultural capital to interact with individuals he came across in his everyday life, engaging himself in lived diversities despite limited experience with super-diverse neighbourhoods.

### Lived diversities in a homogenous neighbourhood

Simon's house was situated in a predominantly white lower middle class/upper working class residential area of Victorian terrace houses, nearby a small local park. There were a few commercial sites a ten-minute walk from Simon's house. A large supermarket, a petrol station and a few fast food restaurants were located by a busy road which marked the beginning of the neighbourhood. With no central place nearby for residents to mingle there was no feeling of community life. Apart from the small newsagent that Simon's British South Asians landlords ran, there were no other local services close by. Nevertheless, Simon had regular contact with cultural others. Compared to the relatively homogenous neighbourhood, his immediate environment, the flat was very diverse:

'You could not imagine a more multicultural flat [he started laughing]. We have a Hindu couple, two Slovakian women sharing a room, one Latvian guy, one more Polish guy and me. I really like how diverse it is! We are all different and we get along well. We

used to have a man from Pakistan who, unfortunately, moved out. I liked talking to him, although I was always conscious about the cultural differences and was worried that I may offend him. I was interested in the country, the history, but also modern Pakistan and the religion. I travelled to neighbouring Iran but never reached Pakistan and it was great that he was so open to talk about it. He was against the system and didn't like consumerism. I really liked him. Anyway, it was at the beginning and I was not sure what topics might be offensive and I did not want to be rude. We used to talk a lot. It's a shame he does not live here anymore'.

First Interview, August 2015

Literature on lived diversities focuses predominantly on super-diverse areas, placing diversity within spatial boundaries of particular demographic geographies. People living in predominantly ethnically homogenous neighbourhoods are assumed to have limited contact with cultural others due to a lack of contact zones in public spaces. Simon's living arrangements did not fit with assumptions about the links between diverse demographic populations of neighbourhoods and contact zones. Simon who did not have a sense of belonging to his predominantly white neighbourhood, expressed curiosity about his ethnically diverse flatmates. He did not seek to move in with Poles or stay close to a Polish community, even though most Polish migrants tend to share accommodation with other Poles by relying on Polish networks (Trevena et al., 2013, Ryan, 2011). His main concern was to move into an affordable place. He found an ethnically diverse flat by chance, without taking these categories into consideration. The absence of ethnic categories in his practices and discourses suggested that ethnicity was not a salient category in his everyday life.

This is not to say that he did not appreciate or recognize diversity. During the same interview, he further added:

'Where I live there is nothing interesting. But where my friend lives [Jan, who he stayed with for a week] it is a Jamaican neighbourhood and I like it a lot, it's great! Basically, only *ciemnoskórzy* [dark-skinned people, a neutral term in Polish] were there and I really liked it because I had never been in such an environment before and it was a very positive experience, it was nice. (...) Whatever Jamaicans do, either walk or talk, they simply celebrate it. But where I live, I can only see luxurious cars, although I don't know if it's a rich area.'

Simon demonstrated an awareness of racial and ethnic diversity, which he positively racialized. He drew a boundary between 'us' and 'them', pointing out the cultural difference of racial and ethnic

others he encountered in another neighbourhood. In the process of learning to live with diversity he essentialized certain traits as inherent in cultures of people of colour. He used a language of respect (Gawlewicz, 2015a) to describe perceived Others. As a newcomer, he showed limited knowledge of British multiculturalism. In his description of the 'Jamaican neighbourhood', even though positively endorsed as 'happy', he expressed assumptions that black minorities are not British, unconsciously manifesting a symbolic exclusion of black people from British national identity (Alexander, 1996). These comments were made a few months after having lived in Bristol, when, as an outsider and observer, Simon tried to make sense of Britain's multicultural population with little knowledge of its historical context. However, in the final interview a few months later, the observed ethnic affiliation within neighbourhoods was described with more caution and less favourably:

'When I first arrived in Bristol this multiculturalism appeared to me very *cool* [in English]. I go to the city centre and I see someone yellow someone black or someone else is green. I thought it was lovely. But I do like it as long as people do not get enclosed in their own ethnic groups too much. I like the idea that that they do support each other. I don't know, if we Poles are a good example of ethnic co-operation. But often when I ride a bike past the city centre and I see a Latin club and there are only Latin people there. Somewhere else I see a group of Hindus, in other places, Chinese. It's great but under one condition, if I may say so: it would be great if this was not transformed into some sort of ethnic enclaves where they close within themselves.

Magda

Do you have any concrete examples in mind?

Simon

Well, I don't know them personally but nearby there is a neighbourhood where there are a lot of Pakistani people, that's what I think. Shops are run by Pakistani people, at least I think so by looking at the facial features.

Magda

How do you know?

Simon

I think I can now differentiate between a Pakistani man or a Hindu man or Chinese and Japanese. Anyway, I've heard that they build their own little states within a state and

then I noticed this as well. At my work I never saw any Pakistani men. Sometimes I come across Hindus but not Pakistani. It may be accidental though.'

Exit interview, March 2016

Reflecting on his personal observations of spatial divisions in Bristol, he indicated issues of self-isolation, singling out particularly Pakistani people, who he had talked about in a positive way earlier with regards to his former flatmate. Interestingly, Simon stressed that his perceptions had changed since he had first moved to Bristol. Multiculturalism was 'cool' when he had first arrived but his perspective became less positive, less naïve. He began to identify certain problems with multicultural co-existence. The observations were made with caution, emphasizing that he did not know the minority groups he mentioned personally. However, his position towards diversity altered slightly from enthusiastic excitement in the first months to more cautious and wary at the end of the fieldwork. He had acquired certain knowledge about British diversity through his everyday experiences, which linked race and ethnicity with self-segregation and lack of ethos of mixing. This extract demonstrates that living with diversity is a learning process during which ideas about ethnic categories are often subject to being re-negotiated.

As mentioned earlier, Simon did not use ethnic or racial categories to negotiate difference in his everyday life. He only spoke about race and ethnicity when I explicitly asked about them. This was evident in his encounters with other Poles and British workers in his racially structured workplace, which I will elaborate on next

### Workplace hierarchies

We met at 10pm outside a large supermarket, situated near Simon's house. He works as a dry goods picker in a food warehouse. From there we cycled to the warehouse, which took us no more than 10 minutes. It was located in a large industrial area surrounded by other warehouses. We had to go through a security gate before we reached the place. As soon as we arrived, we went to the office where he registered. It was a small room on the first floor, above the warehouse floor, where two white British women were working behind their desks. When we entered, Simon greeted them. They replied 'hello' but went straight back to answering the phone calls and chatting amongst themselves. He registered, and we left without any more interactions. Next, we went to the manager's office, which was empty but accessible to everyone. He printed out orders for the night. We finally went to the room where he worked, which was situated in the basement. We had to go through the main hall on the ground floor where six people were working in the fruit and vegetable section.



I could hear them speaking in Polish. Simon looked at me smiling when he heard Polish and stated that most people working on the main hall were from Poland. That was the first time he had mentioned someone's ethnicity, and this was in response to my reaction to hearing the familiar language. Then he quickly added: 'I don't have much to do with them. I don't work with them anyway'. Some of them said hello, others did not pay attention to us as we walked past. Again, Simon did not appear to be concerned about the lack of communication. We arrived downstairs and I met Simon's co-worker, Marek, who had already started the shift. He was also Polish and had been recruited just a few days before my visit, thanks to Simon. Marek was a friend of someone that Simon knew and who had asked Simon to help him find a job. Marek could not speak any English, Simon had to accompany him to the interview to act as a translator. Marek was older, around 40. As a new person in the warehouse, he was still learning from Simon. When we arrived, he immediately asked Simon a few questions about certain types of food he could not find. Simon explained to him where to look for the items and advised him how to manage the orders for the night. After we had been introduced to each other, he did not say a word to me and only spoke to Simon if he had any questions regarding the orders he was dealing with. He did not smile: he seemed very serious and almost hostile.

The room in the basement was quite small and cold. While Simon showed me around, I asked him who else he worked with on his night shifts. There were two more men in the room, both white British (Simon confirmed when prompted), and one was his supervisor. However, their shifts started at 1am and I was not able to stay that long to meet them. When I asked how he got along with them he admitted that he had had difficulties with his supervisor, who was often unhappy with Simon's performance:

'You know, there is so much food I was not familiar with before, all the African and Indian spices, I had no idea what they were so at the beginning it was taking me quite a long time because I had to learn all of them. Sometimes I would work a ten-hour shift running without a break. Do you know what he told me once? "*This was a fucking disaster*" [in English] and I was quite devastated, I mean this kind of bullying was completely unnecessary and demotivating for someone who just started their job.'

Once Simon became more familiar with the tasks and more efficient, he had fewer conflicts with his supervisor. Nevertheless, they never developed a friendly relationship. In fact, his interactions with all co-workers, British and Polish, were

superficial, either limited to glances when he walked past the office and the main hall to arrive in the basement or brief chats about the job with the three men with whom he was working shifts. Moreover, his perceptions of other Poles were rather negative as well and he reported on them to me with surprise:

‘Magda, I’m telling you I have met only ‘pathologies’ here. Marek turned out to be a maniac. I find out all the time that other Poles who work with me are either involved in drugs or other horrible things. Tell me, am I unlucky or are all Poles who come to Britain so pathological?! I feel embarrassed that these are the people who represent our country.’

Field notes, November 2015

Simon’s workplace is a micro- social space in which everyday encounters were shaped by spatially and temporally segregated, gendered and racialized hierarchies (Cook et al., 2011, McDowell et al., 2007, McDowell et al., 2009). White British women worked as administrators in the office, whereas predominantly male food pickers/warehouse operatives and drivers were mainly Polish immigrants. The division of jobs, also reflected in the spatial arrangements of the warehouse, reflects British hierarchies in the labour market. The office situated on the first floor was separated from the main hall and the basement room where the pickers worked. Admin staff and hall workers had hardly any opportunity to interact with one another and met only at the beginning and the end of each shift at the registration and check out. Moreover, the temporal aspect of their work schedule deepened the segregation since the night shifts were dominated by Polish migrants and British workers mainly undertook day shifts. Poles tended to dominate in the low-skilled labour market even though many of them were overqualified for the jobs they undertook (Spencer et al., 2007). In their article on Polish immigrants’ interactions and racialized hierarchies in low-skilled industries, Cook et al. (2011) pointed out the trap that migrants face when employed in a sector controlled by employers and agencies. They constitute cheap labour and are willing to accept bad work conditions, including irregular and long hours and low wages. This results in them working together with limited opportunities to encounter difference and learn English.

Indeed, the warehouse where Simon worked illustrated one of the industries overpopulated by Polish migrants, since they constituted the largest group employed there. The majority of Poles, according to Simon, had a basic knowledge of English. There was no requirement for them to know English because they mainly communicated between themselves. Their encounters with British workers were limited. They created an enclave that Simon was critical of in relation to other ethnic self-segregation and spatial divisions. This ethnic division in his workplace may have caused

tensions. Perhaps as a result of the dominant presence of Poles, a few months later Simon experienced an explicit discriminatory practice from his supervisor, who gave him a reprimand for speaking in Polish to Marek and forbade using Polish at work. As Simon recalled:

‘When he said it for the first time, I thought: “I will ignore it for now, hopefully he will not say it again”. But he did. And it really annoyed me. After the second time I went to the management and complained about it, amongst other things such as too much work and too little help. I organized a meeting and the manager confirmed that speaking Polish is allowed. You know, part of me understands them. They have no clue what we talk about and may think that we talk about them behind their backs. Which we also do, of course! [He started laughing]. But that’s not the point, it is illegal. They can’t tell us we can’t use our language. It’s wrong. I had to do something about it.’

Field notes, December 2015

Hence, when a conflict arose, and Simon felt injustice, he was confident enough to stand up for himself and he immediately made sure appropriate action was undertaken by the company. Often migrants who feel discriminated against accept exclusion and rarely defend themselves (Herbert et al., 2008). As Hirsh and Lyons suggested, those who have the knowledge of law are more likely to be acutely aware of social injustice (Hirsh and Lyons, 2010). Simon, even though he was in a vulnerable socio-economic position, was, thanks to his English skills and understanding of workplace regulations, able to defend himself against perceived discriminatory practices.

Having realised the class and cultural gap between himself and other Poles, and as one of a few Poles who could speak English, whilst also having experienced explicit and implicit hostility from his British line manager, Simon was not able to associate himself with any people he worked with. He was not in-between British and Polish cultures, he was outside both identities of belonging. His indifference towards the people he worked with was only interrupted by incidents when he personally felt social injustice, such as when he was threatened by Marek and when he experienced discrimination. In other circumstances he accepted the social boundaries and did not try to overcome them.

Often, economically and socially disadvantaged Poles manage to climb the socio-economic ladder after a while, once they improve their English skills, gain education and acquire jobs in the skilled and high-skilled sector (Drinkwater et al., 2009). Simon had a position at the bottom of the hierarchy in the labour market, working as an unskilled migrant for 54 hours a week. Nonetheless, he did not express a desire to improve his socio-economic status. Perhaps he did not feel any

pressure to do so, because he had managed to integrate into other aspects of British society through his personal interests described earlier. His lifestyle outside the workplace reflected his interests, such as piano lessons and a contemporary dance class that may be associated with middle-class tastes. His cultural capital, accumulated through previous encounters with various cultures, did not match the working class or migrant culture of his work place.

## Conclusion

Although Simon did not seem to visit 'cosmopolitan canopies' often, he experienced lived diversities through other encounters. He had contact with minorities, migrants and British people in various settings; through his workplace, his living arrangements and his personal interests. Not only did he interact with cultural others, but due to his wide range of personal experiences he also encountered class differences in various contexts. Due to his cultural capital he was not trapped in an economically disadvantaged system, even though his unskilled job placed him at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy. He connected with cultural others through his passions and did not perceive himself to be a disadvantaged migrant, but instead actively re-constructed his ambivalent status. He had acquired cosmopolitan views and practices through his prior travels to Asia. Those skills helped him with his encounters with diversity when he first arrived in Britain. Over time, his perceptions about multiculturalism changed on the basis of his personal experiences to become less enthusiastic and more cautious. Nevertheless, even after a year of living in Bristol he was still the least judgemental person towards other cultures that I had met. Ethnicity was mostly absent from his consciousness. It rarely defined his encounters with difference.

Simon planned to leave Britain after two years. During the final interview, he emphasized his temporality in Britain: 'You know if Brexit happens and they kick us out, I will leave immediately. I will pack my suitcase and go the next day. Nothing keeps me here. I'm just a guest. It doesn't bother me at all'. Simon had not developed a feeling of belonging to British society. But his knowledge of other cultures that he gained through travels before he came to the UK helped him accommodate to diverse Britain. Without feeling the need to be accepted by British society and without engaging in conscious attempts to fit in, he demonstrated skills and abilities through which he had been able to quickly and effectively learn to live with diversity.

My next participant, Tomek, also considered himself as a guest but was willing to stay in Britain for a while. However, after having experienced racism on a number of occasions, his future in Britain was questionable.

## 6 Tomek – lived experiences of everyday racism and urban civility

‘Some of my [Polish] friends have contact with *Murzyni* [black people] but I said that I don’t want to have anything to do with them because it may end badly. I accept them. You know, I’m nice to them on a street. For example, I will give way to an elderly lady in a queue, black or white, it doesn’t matter. Or if someone stands on the street and asks for change, *okay* [in English] I will give it to them regardless if it’s *Murzyn* [a black person] or someone else. I just don’t want to have closer contact, I can be nice to them but that’s it, nothing more than this.’

Exit interview, March 2016

This extract illustrates Tomek’s understandings of diversities in Britain. He admitted that he was reluctant to build any close relationships with black people. And yet, he also showed an awareness of a particular code of conduct expected from him in public places. He claimed that he would act in a civil manner towards anyone regardless of their racial background. As he said, he accepted ‘their’ presence but at a safe social distance. The boundaries of encounters were established at the level of fleeting random interactions. He seemed to follow an etiquette of side-by-side urban co-existence, with a conscious avoidance of more meaningful contact with the perceived Other. Throughout this chapter I will elaborate on Tomek’s efforts to integrate into British society, negotiated through positive and negative experiences with newly encountered others, that shaped his understandings of racial and ethnic difference. I argue that crude racism he often expressed did not interrupt urban civility he followed without any difficulties. Both practices were part of the process of learning to live with diversity and manifested themselves as spatially and temporally contextual. His changing practices, from negative to positive, with Turkish people in his workplace confirm the lack of fixity and permanence of his strategies of living with others.

Tomek arrived in Bristol eleven months prior to the start of my fieldwork, when he was only twenty. He had left Poland for Bristol for financial reasons. He came from a village in South Poland and had lived all his life in a remote house in a forest, two kilometres from the village centre. He came from a large family, he was the youngest child of four. His father was very strict with the children and had taught Tomek self-discipline. He had worked since he was eleven, helping his father on the farm. He had experience in construction, dog training and gardening. He had also trained in martial arts and competed professionally in regional fights. Most importantly for him, he had been learning hunting since the age of six. Tomek’s father was a professional hunter and taught him to hunt. It was his passion and, he claimed, it defined who he was. In fact, getting to know Tomek better, I realised that the ethical principles he followed in hunting were replicated in other spheres of his

life. He learnt confidence, discipline, respect, patience and hard work, skills he demonstrated when he moved to Bristol. School education had never been his priority. He studied for his baccalaureate in Poland (the equivalent of A-levels in the UK) but failed Maths and instead of trying again he decided to move to Bristol.

One of his brothers had lived in Bristol for a few years and helped him to settle in. Tomek stayed with his brother for the first few weeks. He found Tomek his first couple of jobs, a part time job working behind a bar in a local restaurant and shortly after, a job in a delivery company. Tomek soon found a new place to live with other Polish men through Polish networks of his brothers' acquaintances. He moved out a couple of months later because of tensions with some housemates. At the time of the fieldwork, he was sharing a flat with three other Poles, two men and one woman. As he claimed, he finally felt comfortable 'at home'. Living with fellow Poles who he got along with and who became his friends and contributed to creating a Polish home gave him a sense of normality (Rabikowska, 2010a). He was especially close friends with one of them, Andrew, who was just one year older and had similar interests, i.e. camping, outdoor activities and going out to the city centre at weekends. Towards the end of the fieldwork Tomek started dating a Polish girl who had come to Britain when she was a child and who helped him with his English. After eleven months of settling in Bristol, he eventually felt comfortable, had a support network and considered staying for at least another three years. Even though his networks were still predominantly Polish, his girlfriend provided bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000) that helped him integrate with British society by improving his cultural capital, by teaching him English but also helping him to familiarize himself with British culture.

### Encounters with Turkish people at the workplace

Tomek's first full-time job in Bristol was working as a driver's assistant for a food delivery company that offered services to kebab shops, stores and restaurants. His older brother, who had lived in Bristol for many years prior to Tomek's arrival, knew a Polish man who worked in the company and had recommended Tomek to the manager. The company's owner, who according to Tomek was Turkish, agreed to it with a request that Tomek signs a contract for one year. As he explained to me, the company had a high-staff turnover, so the Turkish boss negotiated the contract terms that would guarantee him an employee for at least one year. Tomek always worked as part of a pair with a driver, and his tasks included unloading goods and dealing with payments. He usually had shifts with newly hired drivers, mainly Polish, who could not speak English. Even though his language competency was not very good either, he was more confident in communicating with clients, although not without difficulties.

When I spoke to Tomek about it, he had worked for the company for ten months and was dissatisfied with what seemed quite precarious arrangements. He admitted that he had looked forward to leaving. He explained to me that many times he had to work between sixty and sixty-five hours a week even though he apparently had signed a nine-hour five workdays contract. He claimed that he never knew at what time he would start work, every day he had to wait for a phone call. Sometimes he would finish as late as 11pm or midnight. He was not paid a higher hourly rate for his overtime. As he claimed, every nine hours of overtime were paid as a daily wage, with deduction of a free one-hour lunch break. Thus, if he worked an extra nine hours, he was only paid for eight. Ultimately, not only had he not received a higher payment, but he was paid for fewer hours than he worked. He perceived the arrangements as unfair and exploitative. When I asked if he enjoyed working there he shook his head, explaining that the problem lay in 'having to work with Turkish people'. Then he told me an anecdote:

'I'm not racist or anything. Just, many people are alright, but many aren't (...) You know they wanted to fire me at some point (...) Once we arrived at a kebab shop, but it was closed. I called the owner [a Turkish man, as he later confirmed] and he said he would be there in fifteen minutes (...) When I began unloading the food and taking it inside the shop, he started rushing me and telling I had to be faster. I said that he wasn't my boss and he shouldn't tell me what to do or hustle me. He started calling me names, *jebani Polacy* [fucking Poles] or something like that. (...) I called my line-manager [a Polish man]. He knows what I'm capable of and he asked me to calm down, not start a fight because I may get fired and even go to prison. (...) I went back to the shop, they [the owner and his friend] cancelled the order, so I wanted to collect the goods. They didn't want to let me in (...). We started pushing and shoving. I called my manager again. The owner demanded to speak to him and asked where my shift manager was from. When I said he was Polish, he said he wouldn't talk to a Polish pig. Eventually I left. He called our office to complain. (...) The guys from the office apologised to him! And they ordered me to go back! (...) But you know how I see it? *Turek Turka w dupe szturcha* [he bums him] [laugh].'

First interview, November 2015

Tomek admitted to me a few times that his experiences with Turkish people at his workplace had resulted sometimes in tensions. The argument with the Turkish client, described in the quote, seemed to have started with the man's apparently rude behaviour towards Tomek and offensive name-calling. Tomek reacted to it with anger and aggressive behaviour, which he struggled to hide.

It is not clear who started the fight, but the row ended up with some physical violence apparently from both of them. The office's apologies in response to the client's complaint were interpreted by Tomek not as good customer service but as co-ethnic solidarity amongst Turks, i.e. the Turkish company owner and the Turkish client. This perceived ethnic co-operation and social injustice towards him is articulated by a phrase with homophobic insinuations. In psychological terms it diminished his employer and client's superior position over him in workplace settings. He started the anecdote with a sentence 'I'm not racist', which as Nowicka (2017) argues, is intended to avoid being categorised as prejudiced and to justify his opinion as valid in the circumstances.

The incident, along with other similar occasions that Tomek brought up with me during the fieldwork, illustrate inter-ethnic tensions emerging in a workplace setting that reproduce workplace segregation. McDowell et al. (2007: 2) claimed that migrants are at the bottom of the hierarchies in the British labour market. Bonacich's split market theory illustrates this by suggesting that broader economic factors, such as increased competition, cost reduction, cheap labour, weak regulations of wage work and low protection for workers (Bonacich, 1998, Bonacich, 1972), impact the ethnic segmentation of the labour market. The most vulnerable actors, immigrants and ethnic minorities, are pushed to the bottom of the hierarchy. These groups compete against one another in precarious, low skilled industries. As Bonacich stated, ethnic antagonism is a consequence of minorities' strategies to protect their vulnerable position in the labour market that is undermined by newcomers constituting a cheaper, skilful, young, temporary workforce. The macro-level approach proposed by Bonacich was used in studies on everyday racism at workplaces between minorities and migrants (Fox, 2013, Han, 2009). I claim that the micro conflict between Tomek and his Turkish clients reflects broader structural factors related to their precarious position in the labour market. Tomek worked predominantly with other Poles in a company managed by a Turkish man. Tomek suggested that the high staff-turnover resulted from people's dissatisfaction with the precarious work conditions. However, Poles may have been attracted to work there, most likely because of Polish networks, crucial for those who did not speak English or had no prior work experience in Britain and would otherwise have struggled to find a job. Thus, the legal status of Poles as EU citizens did not necessarily spare them from exploitation. Tensions between Tomek and Turkish clients were verbalized in negative name-calling. Within the specific context of precarious work conditions, Tomek constructed the Other in order to improve his status in psychosocial terms (Fox, 2013).

However, it is important to stress that these conflictual situations, as Tomek pointed out, were rare. Most of the time he did get along with his clients. Indeed, when I accompanied him to a kebab



shop in central Bristol on one occasion in December, I observed only convivial practices between him and the Turkish shop owner and his employees.

When I arrived, I saw Tomek and a driver unloading goods outside the shop. They seemed to be stressed and pressed for time. I tried to talk to them but Tomek exchanged a few polite phrases without stopping his work. A few minutes later when they took all the goods into the shop and had a couple of minutes to spare, Tomek explained to me that they had twenty-five shops to visit that day, located in Bristol and South Wales. I went inside the shop with him and noticed that my presence met with curiosity from the workers and the owners followed by flirtatious chats and smiles. Tomek was too busy to pay attention to me. He was polite but firm with his customers. They were friendly, asked Tomek politely to bring some of the goods to the kitchen, and helped carry the others. They were joking between themselves but Tomek did not get involved in the banter. He seemed to be in a hurry. He did not seem to take note of his surroundings, either in the shop or on the street. He was too focused on his tasks to look around and notice diverse customers and pedestrians. One of the workers said in Polish 'how are you?'. Tomek smiled and exchanged a few phrases in Polish with him. Outside the shop he clarified that he had developed an acquaintance with the man over time. He was Turkish but he used to live in Poland and could speak some Polish. Tomek went back to the shop to collect the payment. It was already 7pm and they still had a few shops to visit. He reckoned they would finish at around 10pm that night. Shortly after they left.

Field notes, December 2015

Even though there were inter-ethnic tensions at Tomek's work, they were occasional and most of the time, Tomek claimed, he got along with his clients. The language barrier did not stop working-class cosmopolitan practices (Werbner, 1999) between Tomek and his clients. Rather than having some dispositions, Tomek and his Turkish customers demonstrated practices that had helped them develop good work relations. Banter and small gestures of kindness were crucial in effective communication. A few friendly exchanges in Polish, and the offer of help with carrying the goods, were appreciated by Tomek. He mentioned to me once that most Turkish clients were 'alright' because they offered food and help to him and the other drivers, a sign that they recognised and valued their hard work. A working-class cosmopolitanism was developed despite weak language competencies. As Pécoud (2004) argued, the entrepreneurial skills of Turkish shop-owners in Berlin lay in their business strategies to engage with a diverse clientele. Similarly, the use of Polish by one

of the employees to communicate with Tomek was a practice that maintained good business relations, a strategy that Wessendorf described as 'corner-shop cosmopolitanism' (Wessendorf, 2014b: 68-72). Consequently, Tomek did not judge all Turkish clients through his bad experiences with some of them and recognized that most of them were friendly and fair. In his exit interview, when he reflected on the job, he talked about it as a positive inter-ethnic experience, marginalizing encountered conflicts as exceptions. Thus, the tensions he experienced seemed to have resulted from the exploitative conditions of his job and perhaps stress inducing situations of conflict rather than from inherently negative preconceptions about Turkish people. His experiences reflected unfixed and inconsistent practices rather than more enduring dispositions towards diversity.

The inter-ethnic co-operation he managed to develop through interactions with Turks contrasted with a lack of solidarity with British people. The language barrier and the perceptions of racism were seen as obstacles to cross cultural engagement with them.

### English people are racist

Tomek could speak basic English, which he had learnt at school, but admitted having trouble understanding British English. Despite the language barrier, Tomek was quite confident in approaching people in Bristol. Lack of education and English skills did not act as barriers preventing him from doing well for himself. However, as he admitted, he had come across a few incidents he perceived as racist: 'I know Poles are racist but English people are so racist!' he told me one day when we were catching up in the town centre. He referred to the weekend before when he had gone out with his friends to a night club. Apparently they had smoked cigarettes outside and had a conversation in Polish, when suddenly a man had approached them:

'This guy punched me so I punched him back. And because I fight better, the guy had it worse (...) I'm not sure what happened. I knocked him down and went away. I was drunk and just went back to a club.

Magda

How do you know it was racist?

Tomek

He kept saying "*fucking Polish...*" [in English] something, I don't know exactly'

Field notes, November 2015

He recalled a few more incidents during his exit interview when he discussed his everyday life. Usually, experiences of racism took place in a bar or a night club, where Tomek and his friends were

supposedly met with aggression from white British men after they had been identified as Polish. Everyday racism in night clubs has been reported in relation to people of colour who claimed that they were either refused entry or if inside the club, were obviously ignored by staff members (Kennedy, 2013, Held, 2015, May and Chaplin, 2008). Tomek, as a white European man, did not face the same discrimination due to the invisibility of his skin colour. However, he became the other as soon as he started speaking and revealed his difference in his accent (Rzepnikowska, 2017: 56). Apart from explicit forms of apparent racist abuse, Tomek was attuned to more implicit forms of marginalisation (Essed, 1991). He claimed that he had been rejected by English women due to his nationality: 'When we go partying with my friend, girls approach me, dance with me, it is fine. But sometimes girls start dancing with me, then ask where I'm from. When I reply I'm Polish, they say: no, thanks, get lost I don't want to talk to you!' (Field notes, January 2016). Similar to Daniel, Tomek was convinced that rejection from British women was linked to his nationality, suggesting that it was perceived by them in negative terms. The described incidents not only questioned his sense of belonging on an ethnic basis, but also challenged his masculinity.

While many authors have pointed out that some migrants seek to disassociate themselves from racialised groups by denying they are victims of racism (Fox et al., 2015, Herbert et al., 2008, Lamont and Mizrachi, 2012, van Dijk, 1992), Tomek openly stated that British people were racist towards him. Reported aggression from British men and hostility from British women were interpreted as racism and, as he later admitted, this was one of the reasons he considered returning to Poland. His socio-economic status as well as performed masculinity were under the threat. The ritual of 'girl hunting' was performed to express the collective masculinities of Tomek and his friends (Grazian, 2007). However, these masculinities were presumably questioned by British men and women who according to Tomek were either aggressive towards him or lost interest in him as soon as they realised he was Polish. Despite his negative experiences, Tomek tried to make contact with white English people. He told me an anecdote about an English woman he had seen working at a petrol station, asked out and went on a date with. Even though they never arranged to meet again, and he admitted struggling to have a conversation with her due to the language barrier, he recalled it as a positive experience compared to his attempts to flirt with women in pubs and nightclubs. Another positive encounter he recalled was his acquaintance with a British man with whom he took a bus journey every day for a few months. Following Wilson's (2011: 647) concept, they created a temporary community by forming a relationship within the bus space and for the duration of the trip to work. Once Tomek changed his job and stopped using the bus, he bumped into the man on a few occasions in his neighbourhood. The acquaintance developed on the bus continued through the exchange of friendly glances later on. While these examples do not illustrate meaningful and

long-term relations with British people, they were mentioned in discussions with me, perhaps to psychologically improve his position in society, often undermined through perceived discriminatory practices.

Tomek claimed that the language barrier was an obstacle in his interactions with British people. He believed that once he improved his English, he would be able to expand his networks that had thus far been grounded in the Polish community (Ryan et al., 2008). Tomek hinted that the British people he wanted to integrate with were white English. This was demonstrated in his 'I'm racist, but...' narrative as I discuss below.

### **I'm racist but...**

One day in February we arranged a catch up in a café close to his neighbourhood. He suggested we should meet in a neighbourhood nearby because it was easy for him to access it by taking just one bus. He lived in a remote residential area, predominantly white and working class. The infrastructure in his neighbourhood was not very well developed with no local restaurants or cafés. I recommended a café, which he knew of. It was in a popular shopping district with many independent shops, cafés and restaurants bordering diverse neighbourhoods on one side and a relatively homogenous white working class on the other. It was our third encounter, I was still getting to know Tomek.

I arrived first and waited for him for a few minutes. When he turned up he went to the counter to order a coffee. It was close to our table and I overheard the conversation. The barista (a white British woman) asked him where he was going to sit, and he did not understand. Having repeated the question twice, I eventually waved at her and she took a note of the table. Tomek looked a bit confused about the miscommunication but did not seem to be embarrassed. I realised that I altered his encounter with the barista and should not have intervened. He paid for the coffee and joined me at the table. I asked him how he had been. He told me about the new job he was going to start in the construction industry. Then he briefed me on his new flat and flatmates and mentioned a discussion he had had with a Polish female friend. He explained to me that she had lived in Britain for eight years and apparently, she had gradually relaxed her views about sexuality. They discussed homosexuality which he was a strong opponent of and said that it had got heated between them. He then added:

'I've got my views and not everyone agrees with them. I'm racist you know, I just don't like *Murzyni* [black people]. I mean I have nothing against them, but I don't want to

have anything to do with them. They cause trouble. (...) It's not like when I see *czarny* [black], I have to punch him, no, nothing like that. But I just keep them at a distance.'

Field notes, December 2015

While expressing his opinion, he was served his coffee by a black British male waiter. He thanked him for the coffee and continued the explicitly racialized discourses, detaching the narrative from his actual experience of interacting with the black man. He then acknowledged that his values sounded controversial to some people and therefore he never expressed them publicly to strangers.

Not only did Tomek openly talk to me about racism from British people but he also stated honestly that he was racist towards people of colour. His anti-black opinions emerged during the anti-homosexual discourse. He expressed a crude form of racism, observed amongst East Europeans who move to Britain without prior direct experience of encountering racial others (Fox, 2013, Fox and Mogilnicka, 2017). However, his perceptions were not expressed openly when encountering black people. They were hidden behind a performed civil inattention. Valentine (2008) and Lofland (1989) point out that civility does not necessarily mean acceptance of difference. This vignette helps to illustrate how the claimed prejudice and performed civility were managed by Tomek in his everyday life. Despite having strong anti-homosexual and racist values, Tomek showed an awareness of the dominant code of practice, i.e. civil inattention, that he had learnt in the British multicultural context and he acted accordingly. The café we went to was not in a super-diverse neighbourhood and the staff as well as customers were prevalently white British. Nonetheless, without frequent exposure to difference, usually experienced in super-diverse neighbourhoods, he had learnt to behave according to perceived societal expectations. He hid his personal opinions that went against the prevalent code of practice performed at the front stage (Goffman, 1971a) for the British audience.

While Valentine and Harris (2016) suggested that performed inattention may portray political correctness resulting from understanding the law and fearing the consequences of breaking it, my data proposes looking at the acts of civility through the lens of Tomek's status as a newcomer and anxieties resulted from compromising his views in the new context. Tomek tried to fit in with society's rules and he interacted with others according to perceived social expectations. His civility was an expression of perceived norms learnt through everyday experiences rather than knowledge of the law. His willingness to be a good citizen compromised his values. He interacted with black people if he had to, but only at a superficial level. He emphasized that his prejudice towards black people did not mean he would perpetrate physical violence against them. Rather, as he explained,

he was unlikely to pursue more meaningful contact with them. Thus, Tomek saw civility as an optimal mode of involvement with people of colour that created a psychological disengagement within spaces of encounters, where he was forced to co-exist with racial others.

Tomek's understandings of lived diversity linked to his status as a new low skilled migrant can be further clarified by the following statement in the exit interview:

'I respect the British culture and I try to adjust (...) When they [black people] come over to us, they shouldn't interfere. This is our culture and that's it. If I went to Pakistan for holidays and they have a different culture there I would try to do everything so I don't offend their culture.'

Exit interview, March 2016

In this quote, Tomek revealed his understanding of his own position in British society. He claimed to be a guest who should (and does) respect Britain's rules. In contrast, people of colour were seen as those who did not respect and honour their hosts (implicitly defined as white English people). Moreover, his perceptions of minorities of colour suggest that he did not see them as *his* hosts but demoted them to immigrants, giving them the same status he had. He emphasized it by contrasting minorities' lives in Britain with the hypothetical behaviour of himself as a tourist in Pakistan, where due to respect he would follow the local customs and culture. A tourist symbolises temporariness, the necessity to act upon prevalent rules and the subordinated status. The comparison between being a tourist and his current in-between position in Britain illustrates his understandings of hierarchies of belonging. The 'white British culture' is the one he needed to adjust to, and did, owing to shared whiteness and Christianity, while people of colour were perceived as the disrespectful ones who failed to show appreciation towards the British host. This may explain his lack of effort to interact more meaningfully with racial others. They were not seen as truly British. Therefore, Tomek accepted their presence as long as it did not interfere with his integration strategies towards (white) British society.

## Conclusion

Tomek's lived experiences reveal his ambivalent status and understandings of British hierarchies of belonging. He constructed racialized boundaries between white and black people, claiming that the latter did not respect Britain and, therefore, struggled to integrate. In his everyday practices he actively avoided direct contact with them. He claimed that some of his friends had black acquaintances but he had already warned them that he would not like to meet and socialize with them. His self-proclaimed racism was not, however, an obstacle to rubbing along in public spaces

when people of colour were encountered in fleeting interactions. The expected code of civility towards diversity took priority in those circumstances over his private opinions. Tomek acted in a civil manner not because he was indifferent to racial difference but because he perceived it as the correct behaviour in public.

His narrative about black people contrasted with his everyday experiences with the Turkish minority he had come across at work. Even though there were ethnic tensions, most of the time he had positive experiences with them, based on reciprocity. These, however, were forced by the work conditions and the sector he had found employment in. Contrary to Tomek's experiences with others at his workplace, Kasia had hardly any contact with co-workers while working as a cleaner. Similarly to Tomek, she could not speak English well. However, the social isolation at work contributed to poor language skills which she struggled to develop.

## 7 Kasia – lack of language skills as a barrier in lived diversities

Kasia and I arranged to meet up one morning to drop off her son at school together. I arrived at about 8.15am at her place. She lives in the same area as Paulina and Adam, just a few houses away in one of the most diverse neighbourhoods in Bristol. Their flat is situated in a terraced house, divided into a number of small flats on each floor. Her mum lives on the ground floor with her partner. Kasia's flat is just above theirs. I walked in and greeted her husband, Irek, and their six-year-old son. Kasia had previously told me he had mild autism and was anxious around strangers. She asked me to arrive a bit earlier so he could get used to me and before we walked him to school. I took off my coat and followed Irek into the kitchen. Their flat has two bedrooms and a large kitchen, which also doubles as a living room. They have a sofa bed, a large TV and a dining table there. The other rooms are small. One is just big enough for a double bed and a wardrobe. The second one is slightly bigger. Kasia, Irek and the four-year-old share one bedroom, while her other two older sons, both in college, share the second one. The flat is cramped and there is not much space for them. The kitchen and the bathroom looked run-down and in need of refurbishment.

After about 15 minutes, during which time Kasia got her son ready and Irek prepared his lunch, we left the flat. The school is situated ten-minutes away from where they live. Her son's school had a trip to Bristol Zoo planned for that day, which parents were invited to. Her husband decided to go along with us to the school, from where they all went on the trip. I could only accompany them to the school. As we walked, we passed other parents with their children, getting off a bus and walking in the same direction. Most families were people of colour, including quite a few Muslims. We walked past small bungalow houses and council housing. When we arrived at school, I noticed only two other white parents (speaking with British accents) waiting about. We waited outside the class until a female teacher opened the gate and invited them in. She was white and, I gathered from the accent, British. We were surrounded by other parents who had brief conversations with one another. I asked Kasia and Irek if they knew any of them. They shook their heads and Kasia replied: 'No, not with our English, it's difficult'. She meant their lack of English language skills, which she had mentioned to me before. She walked her son into the classroom without speaking to anyone. A Polish woman (a teacher at the school, according to Kasia and Irek) approached us and explained to them what would happen next. She also discussed summer classes with them. They were very polite, listening carefully to what she said, but they did not



appear too confident in their understanding of what she was saying. They smiled and nodded to everything they heard, asking bashfully a few clarifying questions. Soon afterwards all of us went to the school's reception where other parents gathered waiting for the trip. We sat down on a bench, surrounded by other parents chatting with one another. Irek said that he was confused about the role of the Polish lady who they had just had a conversation with. He thought at first that she was hired specially to look after their son since she was Polish and had experience of working with autistic kids. But then they realised that she looked after other kids as well and another person was eventually assigned to their son. This suggested that the Polish woman was a Teaching Assistant rather than a teacher, as Kasia and Irek had initially surmised. Irek then said, 'I'm not so keen on conspiracy theories but... I reckon they just didn't want to [only have a Polish TA looking after their son]'. Then he added: 'this lady (short pause) she won't tell us everything, obviously! She is employed by the school and will say whatever they want her to say. And it's difficult for us to communicate.' I sensed a feeling of frustration due to the language barrier. I stayed with them for another fifteen minutes. Finally, a teacher called them for a meeting and at that point I had to leave.

Field notes, February 2016

Kasia lived in a diverse neighbourhood, but without English language skills her contact with diversity was limited, and often features as a barrier to effective communication. As I will discuss in this chapter, her everyday life was segregated in an otherwise seemingly integrated environment. Her life was focused around her closest family and Polish friends. She appeared to be indifferent towards diversity and engaged in discourses about it only when I probed her on it. More meaningful encounters with difference occurred for her in institutional settings, such as her son's school. As mentioned in the opening vignette, the language barrier forced Kasia and Irek to second guess the intentions of school staff, with them sometimes concluding that they were treated as second class citizens due to their nationality and low social status. Their negative interpretations of the school's practices towards them were experienced and expressed as feelings of vulnerability as Polish unskilled workers in British society.

Kasia's everyday encounters with difference exposed uncertainty and anxiety related to her English language inadequacies and a low socio-economic status in British society. In this chapter I investigate how lived diversities are shaped by limited English language skills. I explore the barriers in meaningful encounters with others caused by poor language skills and analyse indifference

towards difference as an expression of disengagement with others rather than following ethics of indifference. Moreover, I elaborate on Kasia's distrust to British society as a result of inability to communicate in English and the difficulties to learn it due to her socio-economic status.

### 'Poles are exploited'- the perceived social status

Kasia arrived in Bristol at the beginning of 2014 when she was 36. When the fieldwork started she had been in Britain for one year and eight months. She followed her family. Her mother, sisters and brothers had lived in Bristol for a few years. She had visited them a few times and decided that she would like to move there as well:

'I wanted [to move to Bristol] long ago, but my husband resisted it. My sister has been here for over ten years, she lives nearby. In fact, most of my family [are here] ...my brothers, my mum; practically the whole family, only one of my sisters lives in France. (...) It was easier for us because I had my family here. If I had had to come *na puste* [without anything; literally *on empty*], then I don't know if I would have had enough courage, with a sick child and all... I have three, two are almost grown up and one is six and a half (...). I had a fixed job [waiting for her], this is why I agreed [to come to Bristol]. I first arrived with one son, and the rest of the family came a week later. I lived at my mum's downstairs and they lived at my sister's (...) We then got social housing, because we had nowhere to go [embarrassed laughter] but we couldn't stay there either. Then we found this flat. We've been here now for one year and one month.'

Initial interview, December 2015

Kasia's elder son was eighteen and lived with them while studying at a local college. The younger son was on the autistic spectrum. Back in Poland Kasia's husband worked while Kasia was a full-time carer for both of her sons. As she explained, his salary was not substantial, and they faced financial hardship. They had to rely on the welfare system for additional financial support. However, after budget cuts, some of their benefits were taken away and they could not cope any longer. They had debts they could not pay back. She told me with frustration in her voice:

'We lived month to month, we had a credit card from Real [a supermarket] for shopping; we bought food and paid the card back the next month, but then we had no money, so we used the card more and ran into debt; [it was like this] over and over again, from one month to the next, how long could we have put up with this? We came here and paid back all our debts. Here the mentality of people is different, everything is done calmly, with no rush, people are more open and more cheerful.'

Initial interview, December 2015

Kasia eventually convinced her husband that the best decision for them would be to move to Britain where they could improve their financial situation with the help of her family. A significant pull factor for Kasia was her established family network, who was able to help her to settle in. Kasia admitted that she would probably have not migrated if her family had not been in Bristol already. Thus, both networks (White, 2010: 74) and economic factors (Drinkwater et al., 2009, Okólski, 2007) played a crucial role in her migration decision. With a lack of English skills and not much work experience back in Poland, she would have faced difficulties finding a job and housing in Bristol. White and Ryan (2008: 1471) argued that '[n]etworks are both a determinant of livelihoods, and also a product of the search for new livelihood strategies'. Similarly, Kasia, lacking both cultural and economic capital, had to rely on her family and friends to find an initial job and housing, and she continued to use these established networks to improve her situation after arriving in Bristol. Kasia took a cleaning job, which she reluctantly revealed half way through the first interview when I asked her if she had had any opportunities to learn English:

'Actually, my first job was only with English people, I mean I was the only one cleaning but other people were English, because it was [pause] a film studio with English people only, but I had no time to talk to them.'

Magda

A film studio? Did they film while you were there?

Kasia [laughing embarrassedly]

I won't say what they filmed [pause] it was phone sex, with girls on the phone in front of cameras... I had to clean where they sat (...) but they didn't do anything else, just sat there and chatted.'

Initial interview, December 2015

Kasia's mum helped her find the job. Kasia replaced her mother's neighbour, a Polish woman, who left the job after she got pregnant. It took Kasia a while to admit to me what her first job had been, she seemed to be embarrassed about it. Employed as a cleaner in a morally stigmatized industry (Scambler, 2007) associated with shame, she had no choice but to accept the stigma-status. It demonstrates the precarious socio-economic status Kasia experiences in British society. A full-time job recommend by trusted networks was the only opportunity she had. After a while Kasia managed to find another cleaning job through some of her Polish friends, where she was working

at the time of the fieldwork. It is a part-time position in an office building located in central Bristol. She worked there in the evenings. Her husband also found a part-time job as a cleaner, but in the mornings. This way they managed to split the childcare between them. Their gendered division of labour had transformed, with her husband no longer the only provider for the family. Thus, he started performing 'a caring masculinity', engaging in fatherhood beyond his traditional breadwinner role (Bell and Pustulka, 2017: 136). Their modest salaries were supplemented by benefits which provided them with a relatively stable income. Despite a rather difficult and precarious financial and housing situation, Kasia claimed that the quality of their lives had improved in Bristol, and they did not want to go back to Poland. However, she was aware of her fragile status here. The upcoming EU referendum added to their anxieties about their future in Britain. As Kasia once told me worryingly: 'We don't have anything to go back to [in Poland]. Nothing is awaiting us. If they want to kick us out, where will we go? To another country in Europe? But who will want *beneficiarzy* [benefit users, an English borrowing with negative connotations]?' (Field notes, February 2016). Kasia demonstrated an awareness of a stigmatized identity of East European EU citizens as 'benefit tourists' (Fomina and Frelak, 2008: 46). She seemed to be aware of the negative social consequences of claiming benefits as the unwanted newcomers. She appeared to accept this inferior status, reinforced in discourses about 'bad migrants' taking advantage of British society, and she vocalized it through concerns about her uncertain future.

Some East Europeans of course do move into more skilled and prestigious jobs, which in some cases is connected to improved English language skills over time or, in others, to their education background (Knight, 2014). However, Kasia's inability to learn English and expand her networks beyond other Poles had been an obstacle in improving her situation. Her work was a hindrance in gaining the necessary cultural capital as it did not give her opportunities to interact with others or learn English. She started at six in the evening, when the building was almost empty. The office was a modern looking building with glassed walls and a minimalistic design, centrally located. She worked on the ground floor in the changing rooms and showers. When I went there with her, there were hardly any other people. While I waited for her outside I saw seven white-collar workers leaving the building. When she arrived, we first approached a receptionist and she signed the register. She greeted him with a shy 'hello', he replied, they both smiled, and we went straight to the changing room. It was a small room with six shower cabins, two toilets and two sinks. All the time I was there no one came to use the space. We walked past only one woman, in her 50s, who, as Kasia explained, worked next door cleaning toilets. She said hello to Kasia in Polish, looked at me expressing bafflement and walked away. As Kasia cleaned the showers, she complained to me about work:

'I've had enough. It's hard, they want me to do more and more. The supervisor [a Polish woman, she added later] asked me to start scrubbing the tiles daily. I hardly manage to do everything on time now! I told them I wouldn't do it. (...) Poles are exploited. I've heard from others [other Poles] that if it is an English person or another immigrant cleaning, they *maja to w dupie* [don't give a shit]. But they [employers] won't say anything to them! But if it's a Pole, then they will get into trouble straight away.'

Field notes, March 2016

While Rzepnikowska (2017) pointed out that many Poles settling in Britain work in multicultural spaces where they interact with cultural others, Kasia's work situation was effectively a segregated workplace which, as Cook et al. (2011) argued, gives rare opportunities for learning English or encountering cultural others. Moreover, Kasia believed Polish workers in Britain were exploited. She based her opinion on her own experience as well as discussions with other Poles. She was convinced that Poles were forced to work harder than anyone else. The popular discourse of the Polish worker as hardworking, prevalent in Britain (Fomina and Frelak, 2008: 44), was interpreted as a disadvantage increasing Poles' vulnerability and exposure to mistreatment by employers. Her narrative also emphasized Kasia's distrust towards British society. It seemed obvious to Kasia that Polish people were treated unequally. She attempted to oppose it at her workplace by refusing to take on more tasks. She appeared to be frustrated, and later during the fieldwork she considered changing jobs. Nevertheless, without decent English skills, her chances of finding better work were low and so she had to wait for an opportunity to arise from her Polish networks. The language barrier limited her everyday lived diversities and hindered her ability to improve her status.

The lack of English skills also affected negatively upon her ability to exercise her citizenship rights. Not only did it cause feelings of distrust and suspicion towards institutions like her son's school, where she could not fully discuss her son's needs with his teachers, and her work conditions, but it also impeded her encounters with health professionals. On one occasion she mentioned to me that she had felt ignored by her GP after having seen her numerous times to discuss her health problems. She concluded: 'I will go to Poland soon and visit a specialist. I will have a proper check-up and finally find out what's wrong' (Field notes, January 2016). Kasia was willing to pay for a trip to Poland and a private doctor's appointment (she lost her health insurance when her husband quit his job and they moved to Britain) to avoid treatment in Bristol, where, she believed, her problems had not been appropriately addressed. Even though, as she further added, she tried to make use of available resources, such as interpreters, she felt the response from her GP was inadequate.

Kasia's example is linked to Phillimore's (Phillimore, 2011) concerns about insufficient support in the health services in Britain for low-income migrants. It also confirms Phillimore's finding that EU citizens travel back to their home countries for treatment.

### The language barrier and living with difference

After living in Bristol for about a year, Kasia started attending an English language course. Classes ran twice a week and we arranged to meet one day in February so I could accompany her to a lesson. The classes took place in another diverse area of Bristol, just five minutes' drive from Kasia's place.

I met her in her flat and we drove there together. I walked into the classroom with Kasia, where there were eight other students, all women. As I later found out from Kasia, five students were Somali, and the other three were Hungarian, Iranian and Polish. The women varied in age. The teacher, a white British woman in her 40s, came in to the room last and started the lesson. It was an entry level 1 English course and on that day the students learnt food vocabulary by analysing a dialogue from a street market. The women had to do various listening and writing tasks. They paired up to do exercises. I noticed that they all voluntarily mixed together when working in twos, regardless of background. Kasia was very focused, however, and did not speak much. She appeared to be shy. Whenever a teacher asked a question, the other women responded immediately whereas Kasia quietly whispered the answers to herself.

Field notes, February 2016

Her lack of confidence in speaking English was evident. She mentioned to me on a few occasions that she would like to be able to speak English, but she didn't think she was able to learn it. In the initial interview she stated: 'I'm brainless, it doesn't come easily to me.' Despite her lack of confidence, she was eager to attend the course and learn. But her personal circumstances, child care and health issues forced her to stop the classes after a while, and so she was unable to sit the exam to move on to the next level. She planned to continue the same class in the next academic term.

Even though Kasia attributes her lack of English skills to her perceived inability to learn, there were other factors which contribute to the fact that she had not been able to acquire the linguistic competence during her two years in Bristol. In her study on Bangladeshi women in London, Nilufar Ahmed (2009) suggested that not learning to speak English is not a personal choice but results from a number of cultural and gender norms shaping women's everyday lives. Kasia's childcare

obligations did not give her the time and resources to enhance her English language skills, because of her inability to attend classes regularly. Moreover, her work arrangements were a further obstacle to improving her English skills, with the isolating cleaning job in a predominantly British environment. She did not interact very often with cultural others beyond the English classes, and she was not able to apply what she had learnt in her everyday routines, which made studying the language more challenging. Her harsh judgements on her own perceived inability to learn English did not fully take into account her precarious status, which disadvantaged her.

Kasia seemed to be frustrated with this language barrier since it affects her encounters with others. She did not appear to be comfortable on her own, and so she tried to always be in the company of someone who speaks English, usually her elder son. When I spent time with her shopping or walking around in the town centre, her son was almost always present. She admitted to me that he was her translator and he would help her with doctor's appointments or other errands, for example, with the city council or school. When she was on her own she tried not to engage in any interactions. At her younger son's school, during pick up and drop off times, Kasia avoided contact with others. She smiled to the teachers and parents she passed but avoided engaging them in conversation. Once, when I went to school with her to drop off her son, I asked her if she knew any of the other parents. She shook her head and replied: 'if I knew the language, I could chat [with them], but I can't' (Field notes, February 2016). Even though Kasia lived in a diverse neighbourhood, and crosses paths with various cultural others in different settings, her interactions rarely went beyond smiles and greetings. The lack of English language competency limited the quality of contact she can have with others (Temple, 2010: 292).

Some observers have pointed out that immigrants who cannot speak English are sometimes marginalised for not willing to integrate (Ahmed, 2009, Alexander et al., 2007). The English language test as part of the citizenship requirements puts further pressure on immigrants to learn English, without taking into account other constraints that can impede learning, such as poverty, ethnic segregation or social isolation at the workplace, or childcare commitments. Poles who do not speak English are also ostracized by other Poles (as seen in Paulina or Adam's narratives) as not willing to integrate or wanting to live in Polish enclaves. As I demonstrate in this chapter, these views fail to take into account the full complexity of factors behind isolation and demonise those who cannot speak English.

Little is known about how Poles without English language competencies understand and encounter difference. Political discourses that emphasise English language acquisition as a key determinant of successful social and economic integration (Casey, 2016) tend to stigmatize those who cannot

speak English well (Alexander et al., 2007). As I demonstrated in previous chapters, speaking English fluently does not protect Poles from racism, and therefore competency in English is not sufficient by itself for developing a feeling of belonging to British society (Temple, 2010). Kasia, who claimed benefits and did not know English, may represent a category of 'a failed citizen' (Anderson, 2013) who is supposedly incapable of integrating. Nonetheless, as I will elaborate in the final section, Kasia perceived herself as integrating well with British society due to her respect of its principles. In terms of living with diversity, Kasia expressed a type of indifference that resulted from the limited contact with others. Despite her segregated Polish life, brief encounters with others and limited experiences with everyday diversity did not lead to racializing discourses or practices.

### Indifference to difference

Throughout my fieldwork Kasia never pointed out the ethnic or racial background of the people she encountered. The absence of racialized categories from her discourse was only interrupted when she was prompted by me to describe the people she had interacted with. This was surprising at first, considering her neighbourhood's diversity and her daily exposure to difference. But after a while I realised that her indifference reflected a disengagement with others due to the language barrier. Not being able to understand or communicate with non-Poles seemed to have distanced her from others socially, despite physical proximity. I spent many hours walking with Kasia around the city centre, her neighbourhood, visiting her son's school and her English language school, all in diverse settings. On every occasion she seemed genuinely uninterested in others. We walked past different versions of the 'other' with her barely registering their presence. Sometimes we happened to be in social settings where we were a racial minority. This occurred in the institutional setting of the school and in some commercial contexts. Once, when we visited a Subway fast food restaurant in the city centre, the only other customers apart from us were a group of six black teenagers. As soon as we entered the shop, she gave money to her son who ordered food for himself while we were waiting for him at a table. He soon joined us and we continued having a conversation. She did not have to interact with others and she barely even looked at anyone. The disengagement with people around appeared to be linked with the lack of effort required to communicate with them. Kasia managed to maintain the Polish context, while moving around diverse contexts. The racial ethnic and religious difference encountered in everyday routines went unnoticed and was meaningless for Kasia. When directly asked in the exit interview, she admitted that she had paid more attention to ethnic others when she first arrived in Bristol: 'I used to visit my sister before moving over here. And I even liked it [diversity]. I wanted to take pics of Hindu women, in their outfits, when they walked on streets, but I was embarrassed' (Exit interview, March 2016). Kasia seemed to be fascinated by the newly encountered difference, the exoticized other.



Over time, however, her curiosity faded into banality and the visible difference at first taken notice of eventually became unimportant in her everyday Polish context.

When asked about her current perceptions of diversity, Kasia responded:

‘Actually, it depends on the person, some *za bardzo się panoszą* [have too much attitude], they think they are masters and rulers and that they can do whatever they want.

Magda

Who do you mean?

Kasia

It depends. [I mean] most *czarnoskorzy* [black-skinned, a neutral term], but not all, right? It depends on the person (...) Recently my husband and I were driving down the road in our own lane when this one guy [implicitly a black man] tried to push into our lane, and started beeping and calling us names (...) As I now say, if someone has a bit too much attitude, then it annoys me: they are strangers in this country as much as we are, and they should adjust too (...) I don’t mind people living here but the area is a bit unsafe, they take drugs and drink on streets, and it’s dirty, it’s not a good area.

Exit interview, March 2016

This quote expressed implicit understanding of who is a British citizen. Black minorities are portrayed as strangers, as non-British. This suggests that their belonging is conditional, since they are expected to ‘adjust’ to the predominant (i.e. white English) culture. Kasia suggests that the status in British society of black people and Poles is similar. Both are defined as strangers who should respect the societal principles by ‘adjusting’, understood as behaving well. She seemed to claim that Poles were the ones who knew how to conduct themselves. Hence, the quote suggested that Kasia perceived herself as a good citizen, who followed the rules and acted in accordance with societal expectations. Interestingly, even though she constructed her identity as a good guest that she contrasted with negative behaviour from some black people from her neighbourhood, she was reluctant to generalise her opinion to all black people and recognized instead that not everyone misbehaved. As Temple (2010) suggested, with a lack of fluency in English, Poles’ encounters are limited and their perceptions of diversity are thus often based on conspicuous behaviours in public spaces. The observations made by Kasia were drawn from her personal experiences of fleeting interactions with racial and ethnic others limiting opportunities for more meaningful interactions.

The categories of difference such as 'race' religion and ethnicity, significant in other participants' lives, did not seem to constitute a salient marker of Kasia's social identity. As she further noted, certain conduct in public spaces such as excessive drinking, drug use and littering on streets seemed to be more striking as British cultural traits for Kasia (see also Temple, 2010). These forms of behaviour were condemned as anti-social and inappropriate.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I elaborated on various factors that shaped Kasia's experiences of living with difference. The socio-economic context affecting her precarious status hindered her opportunities to learn English. With her ongoing childcare responsibilities and a job as a cleaner she could not expand her networks beyond her Polish ties, even though she expressed that she wanted to. This was an important insight, since minorities who do not speak English are often portrayed in public discourse as self-isolating and not willing to integrate. She maintained mostly Polish networks; however, this was not reflected in any tendency toward racialized discourses or negative practices with cultural others.

Although Kasia lived a segregated life within a larger, diverse neighbourhood, she was predominantly indifferent to the difference she encountered on a daily basis. Little attention paid to cultural others in her everyday life resulted from a cultural disengagement, maintained by the Polish context she was assured of having access to, in various social settings. Thus, a lack of English language skills does not necessarily translate into an inability to integrate into society. It may reflect newcomers' disadvantaged position. As Kasia's example illustrates, her lack of linguistic competencies led to distrust towards institutions and the interpretation of authorities' practices as marginalizing, which caused anxieties about her future. But living side-by-side with cultural others did not seem to be an issue. Kasia's example illustrates that certain individuals and their practices can be missed out by the literature focused on super-diverse spatial contexts. My next participant, Paulina, lives in the same neighbourhood as Kasia, a few houses away. However, Paulina coming from a different socio-economic background in Poland and having a different family structure, engages with the neighbourhood through other social spaces that shape her understanding of difference.

## 8 Paulina – ambivalent negotiations of class and racial identities

The second time I met with Paulina she invited me to her place for dinner. She lives in one of the neighbourhoods in Bristol with the highest levels of ethnic diversity. She and her husband share a large 5-bedroom house with six other people: two other Polish couples and two Spanish migrants. They live on a main street in a Victorian terraced house, close to the main shopping area in the neighbourhood. When I arrived, she introduced me to her husband. It was a sunny day, so we decided to stay outside in their garden at the back of the house. After a brief chat Paulina said she would pop round to a local shop to buy some drinks and asked if I wanted to join her. The shop was two minutes away, further up the main road. It was a local off-licence. When we entered it, a shop assistant greeted us in a friendly manner. He knew Paulina's name as she was a regular customer. I could not figure out where he was from, his skin colour was dark, and accent was strong, and I reckoned he originally came from South Asia. (Later on, in the exit interview Paulina told me he was from Sri Lanka.) They got involved in a convivial conversation about how their days had been so far. A few days before she had had a new tattoo on her arm done, which she was showing him and telling him about. He was complementing her on it and wondering why she had chosen an arm and suggested that it would have looked better on her back. She explained that she would not be able to see it. During this brief interaction they smiled, laughed and were very friendly and kind to each other. It was evident that they had got to know each other quite well, it seemed that they had developed a good relationship, a closer one than he would have had with a random customer.

When we came back home, her husband was joined by their two other housemates, a couple Patrycja and Adam. Adam asked us if we had already been to the shop. Paulina replied: 'Yes, the local one'. He then asked: 'You mean you went to "Cappuccino's"? All four of them started laughing and at first I did not understand the joke, so I asked what he meant. They explained that this is what they called the shopkeeper. From the following conversation they were having, I gathered they were referring to his brown skin colour. They talked about him with a patronizing attitude and were laughing at him in a belittling way. She reported on the conversation she had had with him:

'Cappuccino was asking me why my new tattoo is on the front of my body rather than the back. He suggested that it would have been more visible to people at the back. You know [she paused and rolled her eyes] he was suggesting that when men shagged me from behind, they would have something to look at.' They continued laughing. No one made any further comments, they all silently accepted it as true as if they expected such remarks from him. Then Paulina's husband made a joke that perhaps 'Cappuccino' should have a white tattoo and all of them started laughing again. Then he added that Adam was 'Cappuccino's favourite one. They were all giggling and I was confused and asked if the man was gay. Neither confirmed it but they all agreed that he was always suspiciously much nicer to Adam than to anyone else. They were ridiculing him and not taking him seriously. I sensed contempt but not hatred.

Field notes, August 2015

I witnessed how Paulina's practices changed within minutes in two spatial contexts in close proximity to one another. In the shop, where Paulina directly encountered an 'Other', she followed a convivial neighbourhood etiquette developed between residents whose common locality overcomes their cultural boundaries. Ethnic difference did not define them in the local space where they both belonged. However, as soon as she came back home and talked with her Polish friends about her encounter, the tone of the conversation changed and the discourse about the Other became hostile. Racialized talk about his skin colour, undermining his masculinity and suggesting his deviant nature constructed the boundaries all over again and re-defined who 'we' and 'they' are in their private setting. Ethnicity and 'race' had been unremarked upon in the direct encounter with the shop assistant but became salient in private conversations. Thus, the convivial interaction did not reduce prejudice, they remained marked in a different setting a few minutes later. On the other hand, the exclusion in the more intimate setting of Paulina's home was not followed later by overt expressions of hostility. On the contrary, a friendly relationship between Paulina (and her housemates) and the sales assistant continued, as Paulina noted in the exit interview. When I explicitly asked her about her experiences with Others in the context of everyday multiculturalism, she talked about the same person in a respectful and positive manner and said that it was an example of her positive experiences of diversity. She also expressed regrets that he no longer worked in the shop emphasizing that she had become very fond of him. These practices, even though they defined difference in contradictory ways, were not reflected upon by Paulina as

inconsistent. They were performed according to a social context and were not considered by her as clashing or incoherent.

These micro-geographies in a super-diverse neighbourhood show the ambivalence entrenched in lived diversities, missed out in the literature on everyday multiculturalism that focuses on interactions in particular social settings. Such an approach does not provide insight into other contexts and does not explore how the same individuals may re-negotiate difference as their settings change. The above vignette illustrates that the discourses Paulina engaged in did not reflect her deeply held dispositions to either being cosmopolitan or racist, but they were practices she adjusted to individuals and spatial contexts in which she interacted with others in her everyday routines. Hence, it questions assumptions that intercultural connectedness straightforwardly reflects cosmopolitan attitudes (Hannerz, 1990), the achievement of living together (Werbner, 2013), or that discriminatory talk indicates inherent prejudice (Valentine, 2008, Valentine, 2010). On the contrary, the various strategies of engaging with others appear in specific contexts, are dynamic and directed towards specific audiences. They change depending on individuals' social roles, status, spatial arrangements and the socio-economic and political contexts in which encounters take place.

Some authors argue that there is a discrepancy between claimed values and performed practices (Valentine, 2008, Nowicka, 2015). The paradox is illustrated by examples of convivial encounters amongst prejudicial individuals (Valentine, 2008) and claims of marginalizing practices amongst self-proclaimed tolerant people (Nowicka, 2015). However, the vignette above demonstrates that Paulina is neither really cosmopolitan nor genuinely racist. She engaged in both in various contexts and cannot be defined as one or another. These practices, even though contingent upon context, resulted from her personal values and perceptions of difference, which she had developed in Poland and verified by lived diversities experienced in Bristol. As I will argue throughout the chapter, her practices with others were reshaped by her perceived exclusion from the white British majority that she claimed to have experienced in predominantly white and middle/upper class environments. Her perceptions of exclusion contributed to both cosmopolitan claims and discourses reproducing racial hierarchies. This chapter offers an insight into micro-geographies within super-diverse settings, in which an individual engages in various strategies behind the expressed civility towards diversity. I argue that Paulina's migration story demonstrates the efforts to negotiate ambivalent racial and class identities, shaped by a new migrant's perceptions of hierarchies of belonging in Britain.

## Not as white? Encounters in white middle-class areas

At the time of the fieldwork, Paulina had been living in the UK for only two years. Most of this time she had spent in Bristol, although she lived in Bath in her first couple of months in Britain. She had some Polish friends living there who had helped her move in. Even though both Paulina and her husband found jobs in Bath relatively easily, they soon moved to Bristol because, as Paulina explained, she did not feel comfortable in Bath. When I probed her about her experiences in Bath, she told me the following anecdotes:

‘Recently, I went shopping in Jolly’s with Patrycja [her housemate]. We wanted to look around at wedding dresses for her. I saw a pair of leggings I liked on a mannequin, I could not find another pair on the shop floor. I asked a lady to help me and she just said: “They are over there” and left. I looked at the sizes and they didn’t have mine, so I asked if my size was the one on the mannequin and she just said “Yes, it is”. Then she stared at me in silence and finally asked: “Why, do you want me to take them off for you?!” And I thought “What the fuck? What kind of question is that? Yes, please!” I said I would take them without trying them on and I was following her to the till when she suddenly said: “It’s not this till, you have to go to the other one” and pointed it out. I thought ok, fine. I wasn’t sure why but perhaps it’s their system which I don’t understand. Then at the other till another woman was rearranging dresses at the hangers and wouldn’t come to the till. Patrycja told me: “It’s so obvious she can see us” I replied: “Yes, I know!” I looked at her, I smiled to her. I wasn’t rude, and I didn’t look at her angrily. She still didn’t come over and managed to serve another woman in the meantime. So, I went to another till and asked another young woman if she could serve me and she was like: “Yes of course, I will ask my colleague, she is serving someone else now”. And I felt so fucking awful...I don’t know, maybe it’s all in my head but it only happens in Bath to me. When I finally paid for the leggings, I told Patrycja: “You know what, nothing like that ever happened to me in Bristol. Never”.’

Later, she described her experience when she worked in a café in Bath:

‘You know, they were treating me like *[pause]* “poor little Polish girl, aww, my dear, my dear, do you like Bath?” [in English]. You know, the kind of attitude as if I came from a small village. I’m from Krakow! They didn’t even know it!’

First interview, July 2015

The above quotes demonstrate Paulina's perceptions about white British people's attitudes towards her. She pointed out the inappropriate behaviour of her customers and shop assistants, suggesting that it had to do with her nationality. There was no evidence of explicit discriminatory practice towards her. Nonetheless, she interpreted the conduct as reflecting a prejudice against Polish people. Bath is a small city settled predominantly by white<sup>9</sup> middle- and upper-class<sup>10</sup> residents. As a World Heritage Site, it is an internationally known tourist destination most famous for its cultural history associated with Georgian architecture and as an inspiration for Jane Austen's novels and the Roman Baths. Paulina struggled with the lack of diversity and the perceived othering, which she linked to her nationality and social class as a low-skilled worker.

The apparent belittling from British people demonstrates how ethnic categories were evoked by Paulina to comprehend her everyday experiences. Paulina interpreted the impolite behaviour she had come across in Bath as resulting from some British people's prejudice towards her Polish identity. Thus, these perceptions of discrimination (Pager and Shepherd, 2008) were related to her understandings of her socio-economic position in British society and the broader context of British discrimination towards Poles that she seemed to have learnt about through living in Britain. Paulina had a degree in cultural studies, spoke fluent English and had eight years of experience of working in art galleries and the hospitality sector. The downward mobility she experienced in the UK, working as a waitress, limited her opportunities since her cultural capital acquired in Poland did not translate to the British context. Her degradation in status was exacerbated by unpleasant experiences with British people, including the perceived patronizing and contemptuous behaviour that questioned her past experiences, skills and knowledge. Verkuyten (2005) argued that discourses of discrimination amongst perpetrators and victims serve various social purposes with different consequences. He elaborated on various talk as strategies questioning the majority/minority dichotomy and shifting individuals' positions discursively. It may be argued that by applying discourses of discrimination, Paulina wanted to reassert her higher status that had been challenged in the UK. She decided to resist apparent discrimination by moving to Bristol, a bigger and more diverse city where she felt more at home. She expressed her dislike of those areas of the city which were demographically similar to Bath's population. On one occasion, when I saw her, she reflected on her recent visit to a neighbourhood that is mostly populated by white and middle-class residents, with unaffordable accommodation for low-skilled workers:

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/ethnicity>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157346/report.aspx#tabempocc>

‘Once I went there with my husband. I liked it, I thought it was beautiful, but I realized that I could not live there. I prefer the neighbourhood where I am living now. Everyone comes from everywhere in the world and I feel more comfortable in this mix of cultures. My husband said exactly the same thing.’

Field notes, October 2015

Hence, Paulina continued to protect her status by discursively detaching herself from places that demographically were similar to Bath, where she experienced apparent discrimination. She felt displaced in affluent middle-class areas, where she realises the economic gap between local residents and herself and where her belonging to British society was questioned. Diverse neighbourhoods are often perceived by migrants of colour as home, places where they belong, since they share space with familiar others. In contrast, in more ethnically homogenous areas they may feel ostracized or experience racism (Husband et al., 2014, Wessendorf, 2016, Wessendorf, 2017). While Pemberton and Phillimore (2016) suggest that East Europeans may feel more at home in less diverse areas due to shared whiteness, and estranged in diverse neighbourhoods, Paulina feels more comfortable in a diverse neighbourhood. Paulina’s story emphasizes the importance of not only racial but also class differences in newcomers’ place-making strategies (Pemberton and Phillimore, 2016) and challenges the notion of whiteness as homogenous. Paulina’s choice of neighbourhood was driven by its ethnic and racial diversity and experiences of perceived exclusion in predominantly white British areas. In more homogenous areas, East Europeans can become more visible and their whiteness may be challenged due to their socio-economic status. Thus, Paulina wanted to live in a social space where she would feel recognized as equal by others not due to shared national origins but due to its cosmopolitan character, where ‘everyone comes from everywhere’. Paulina’s example confirms Wessendorf’s claims that newcomers to super-diverse neighbourhoods appreciate diversity ‘on the grounds of “not sticking out” as different’ (Wessendorf, 2016: 451), it also demonstrates how the appreciation of diversity is learnt through the experience of perceived exclusion in more ethnically homogenous areas (Wessendorf, 2017). Paulina’s recognition of diversity did not emerge in the course of living in a super-diverse neighbourhood but was rather driven by a feeling of displacement in areas where Paulina’s ethnic and classed difference was visible and negatively interpreted. Poles’ status in British hierarchies of belonging may be described as a racialised ‘in-between’ position (Barrett and Roediger, 1997), i.e. not black but not white enough that intersects with their class and ethnic identities. They are negatively racialized as cultural others (Fox et al., 2012) and as threatening the labour market (Fitzgerald and Smoczynski, 2015). This illustrates that whiteness is a trait which is associated with status and power (Garner, 2007) but not easily accessible by white migrants from East Europe who



can be socially and economically disadvantaged (Anderson et al., 2006, Spencer et al., 2007). Paulina's discourses demonstrated an awareness of her ambivalent position in society. Thus, she tended to avoid spaces where, she thought, her class and nationality were seen as inferior or undesirable and chose social contexts where she felt accepted.

Hence, investigating her experiences beyond the context of the diverse neighbourhood gave an insight into how a sense of belonging to the local community had emerged. Paulina's appreciation of diversity was manifested through performed cosmopolitan practices.

### Performed cosmopolitanism

'It's great because they know you already, it's totally different, you feel like you're being part of the *community* [in English], right? It's different to being enclosed within four walls and the whole rest of the world is strange for you.'

Exit interview, February 2016

Paulina emphasized the importance of belonging to her local community. Even though her engagement with the local area was restricted to mostly one type of encounter based on commercial exchange, due to familiarity with local shopkeepers, she felt she was part of a community since her mundane routines helped her develop a bond with local residents. The racialized practices of constructing boundaries, in the context of her house shared with predominantly co-ethnics, did not interfere with the feeling of inter-ethnic belonging created in spaces of her diverse neighbourhood. She justified it with her cultural capital and claimed to have cosmopolitan dispositions:

'I'm a born traveller. Ideally, I would love to live somewhere for two to three years and then move somewhere else, so I can meet and see other cultures. Anyway, I studied cultural studies and history. And I always wanted to see something else, experience it, have memories, feelings, what you have inside you, not the material things. It took me a while to convince my husband, but he finally agreed and now he doesn't regret it at all.'

First interview, July 2015

While Paulina stated earlier in the interview that the economic situation in Poland forced them to live in Britain, financial gain was not the only reason for the move. She wanted to experience living in a different culture and learn new customs, and the UK gave her opportunities she lacked back in Poland. Indeed, having observed her everyday routines I noticed early on that Paulina made explicit efforts to mingle with people of different origins. Her colleagues, who soon became friends, were

either British or other European (Italian, Latvian or Spanish). She made friends with her husband's Somali and Black British colleagues. Moreover, Paulina's practices were consciously cosmopolitan and she simultaneously tried to distance herself from the Polish migrant networks. As she explained in the following words:

'Why would I go to a Polish restaurant if I'm living in England? [laughing] If I'm here I should use whatever is available here. I don't like Polish food anyway and honestly, I don't miss it. When I'm in Poland, I eat Polish food, in Spain – Spanish, and in England I eat burgers. This is what I don't understand, that people miss food, I don't know, Polishness, but what does it mean? Polishness? I don't get it. This was what shocked me most here. I'm telling you, when I moved to Bristol, I blended into this mix completely, there was no such a thing as adjusting or compromising. The only thing I had to learn was to use those polite phrases we don't use back in Poland such as *please, thank you, I'm so sorry, thank you very much* [in English].'

First interview, July 2015

As the quote demonstrates, Paulina wanted to improve her status by detaching from the Polish community (Moreh, 2014). She was critical of Poles who were visible by 'doing Polish stuff', such as using Polish shops or services (Rabikowska, 2010b, Galasinska, 2010). Discursive distance from other Poles was used to emphasize her cosmopolitan skills and draw a boundary between her and other Poles. The following comment reinforces the point:

'When people come to visit me, they say: you get on a bus and you are the only white person, everyone else is black. I don't notice it anymore, even if this is true. Or when I queue in a local shop, I don't pay attention if in front of me there are three Muslim women with three children or, I don't know, two pissed British guys, I don't know, I don't pay attention to it (...). You eventually stop categorizing people, you simply see a woman or a man in a queue.'

Exit interview, February 2016

Paulina claimed a moral superiority over other Poles on the grounds of having learnt to appreciate diversity and supposedly having become indifferent to difference in the process of adjusting to living in Britain. This is further emphasized in her linguistic practices. Not only did she avoid direct contact with Polish industry services but also frequently talked with her Polish husband, friends and me in both Polish and English, weaving in English words into a conversation, more than any other participant. Thus, she constantly switched from Polish to English in conversations. From the

observed encounters and numerous conversations I had with her, I gathered that her version of 'Ponglish' (Nowicka, 2010: 22), the hybrid version of both languages, was used to stress her ability to 'blend into the mix' through the fluent use of English. Still, as the quote above demonstrates, her claimed indifference pointed out, paradoxically, cultural, ethnic and religious differences in an explicit way. She names Muslim women and British men, associating them with having children and drinking culture respectively. These perceptions demonstrate that Paulina, in her efforts to embrace diversity and the cosmopolitan practices she manifested, simultaneously learnt about British hierarchies of belonging based on cultural, class, religious and racial identities, as I will explore below.

### Conditional belonging and racist discourses

On one occasion when I met Paulina in January she updated me on her recent trip to Sri Lanka that she had taken over the Christmas holidays. We were shopping in Primark, looking through clothes and chatting about her vacation. At one point she said:

'I wouldn't mind going back to Asia and living there for a while. They [she paused, looked around and whispered] like white people, and when you know English, then as a white person you can get a job in any touristy place! Because you represent yourself. I'm telling you, they treated me there like a queen! They prefer white people, for example, for jobs at a reception, more than Hindus!'

Field notes, December 2015

Paulina wanted to demonstrate how she had embraced diversity through performed cosmopolitan practices. However, in the course of fieldwork she often invoked racial categories when talking about difference. The above quote discursively improved her status through emphasis on her whiteness that seemed to mean a privileged status in the Sri Lankan context. She claimed to have been defined there in racial and desirable (as white) rather than in ethnic and negative (as Polish) terms. Being 'treated as a queen' contrasted sharply with the perceived social exclusion in Britain. Even though Paulina claimed to be cosmopolitan, in the exit interview she reflected on diversity in her neighbourhood using racist discourse:

'You know, sometimes when we arrive home and can't find a parking space we may say: "For fuck's sake, this *ciapak* [see page 60] took our space again". We have lived here for a while, we can recognize which cars belong to whom. But for me it doesn't have this undertone. It's as if you said about a woman: "What a stupid blonde" or about a black man: *czarnuch* [nigger] took my space" and a black person would say about a

white one: “a whitey”. Of course, there is nothing nice when someone categorizes you in this way, but sometimes it does not have this pejorative undertone.’

Exit interview, February 2016

In the above quote Paulina used explicitly racist language, although she did not perceive it as racism, claiming that there was no bad intention meant in the kind of discourse expressed. As demonstrated earlier, Paulina seemed to be very sensitive about apparently implicit racism from British people towards her, but she did not perceive her talk about ethnic and racial difference as racist. She justified it as contextual, commonly used and harmless. These ambiguous perceptions demonstrate lived diversities as a process of learning about difference that involve perceptions of peoples’ statuses in society. They maintained her ‘in-between’ position on a level above certain minorities and below the white British majority. Even though she claimed to enjoy the multicultural context she lived in, she operated with certain racial categories already existing within British norms and social structures, trivializing racialized language as similar to calling someone ‘a stupid blonde’. Thus, the language of stigma (Gawlewicz, 2015a), although recognized as negative, was validated.

The use of racialized language was also evident in her complex understandings of diversity in her neighbourhood. Even though Paulina did not consider moving out to another neighbourhood, she was aware of its bad reputation associated with ‘black’ poverty and crime which she partially agreed with. Thus, she applied certain strategies of caution based on racialized categories:

‘There is this pub on our street, and every moment someone stabs someone else with a knife over there (...) You know which one I mean? The pub just over here [she pointed out in the air], at the bottom of our road. During the week it’s just a pub but at weekends there are parties, it’s quite famous in Bristol. On Fridays they have reggae dance parties. On Saturdays there are other parties [short pause] I would say, [pause and then she says it quieter] for white people (...) They harass girls. And when you are not mixed-race or black, then it’s not so great for you, that’s what I’ve heard (...) But when girls go there, even with their boyfriends, actually, it’s worse for their boyfriends. Because you don’t know how to react when *Murzyn* [a black man] starts rubbing against you.’

First interview, July 2015

Paulina discursively criminalized black men, drawing on the racial and gendered divisions that she constructs. The ‘black’ pub was perceived as not a safe space for white people, especially women.

The description of the pub's negative reputation in racial terms confirmed broader discourse criminalizing black bodies (Alexander, 1996). Paulina's knowledge appeared to be shared with other people and assumed to be common. Paulina learnt it from other, not only Polish, friends. Hence, the pub's bad name of being a crime spot was associated with the presence of black men, with racialized hyper masculinities, as predators towards white women (Fanon, 2008). Similarly, Paulina learnt negative connotations associated with South Asian minorities. The same day when I visited her for the first time and met her flatmates, when I asked them about the house they lived in, Paulina replied: 'We are renting it from a Hindu guy, *but he is alright*. He likes us because we always pay on time, we look after the house and the garden'. The positive racialization runs across ethnic lines: 'He is a Hindu but he is alright'. The landlord is perceived as a cultural Other because of his South Asian background and he is put into the same category as other Hindus, implicitly perceived as problematic, without recognition of intra-ethnic differences and more complex social identities amongst South Asian minorities and migrants (Charsley and Bolognani, 2017).

The stigmatization of people of colour occurred unreflexively, simultaneously with the everyday experiences of celebrating diversity. Indeed, ethnic and religious diversity were assets in Bristol for Paulina, something she was deliberately looking for in the UK. On numerous occasions when I observed Paulina in public spaces I could sense this proclaimed and genuine enjoyment from living in a diverse place. She was putting a lot of effort into being part of a diverse society and to being recognised as one of 'us', the cosmopolitan mix. The fact that she did not question the link between black people and the criminality of the pub demonstrates how ideological racism embedded in peoples' lives is reinforced in their mundane interactions. Her contradictory practices unravel complex processes of learning to live with diversities that encompass both practices of exclusion and inter-cultural bonding.

## Conclusion

As elaborated in this chapter, Paulina invested her cultural capital into blending in with British society. She was keen to meet people of different cultures and proactively searched for contact with them. Nevertheless, while claiming to be cosmopolitan, she often used racialized language to describe difference. Moreover, she felt rejected by the white British majority and struggled to form friendships or closer relationships with white British people. Negative experiences and discourses did not interfere with her civil etiquette towards others, however, they were available as a repertoire which she operated with in certain situations of conflict.

It is a common, and understandable, practice to investigate living with diversity through exploring (super)diverse neighbourhoods and many ethnography scholars focus their attention on these

complex and pluralistic spaces in terms of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and economic division. Yet, it is necessary to acknowledge the mobility of individuals and their practices outside these neighbourhoods. Often, (super)diverse working-class areas seem to be idealised as communities, where shared spaces create a sense of belonging (Amin, 2005). This chapter pays particular attention to micro-spaces of interactions within a diverse neighbourhood and beyond, which shape individual's understandings of experienced diversity. I argue that lived diversities consist of contradictory practices that result from perceptions of difference learnt in Poland and transformed over their time in the UK in the process of learning the hierarchies of belonging. Thus, Paulina's appreciation of her diverse neighbourhood emerged from her perception of being racialized in white British areas, where she felt she was a visible minority due to her ethnicity and low socio-economic status. Even though she claimed to have cosmopolitan dispositions, she often engaged in racialized discourses. These practices of exclusion were accompanied by civil encounters.

The five respondents whose portraits I have described so far have all lived in Britain for less than two and a half years. As discussed throughout the chapters, their vulnerable status as newcomers, low skilled positions they are forced to undertake at the beginning of their migration journeys and lack of familiarity with British diversity affect their everyday practices with others. These are shaped by their personal stories as well as still developing perceptions of hierarchies of belonging in Britain. They seem to understand Britishness in terms of whiteness, Europeaness and Christianity. Everyone who does not fit into this category seems to be in an inferior position of a tolerated by white British people minority. Such a picture of multicultural Britain is then reproduced in practices of tolerance, urban civility and self-policing against racism. Much of the effort put into being good citizens is conscious in order to be accepted. As I will argue in the next five chapters, the more established Poles see themselves more integrated and therefore, pay less attention to explicit strategies of being recognized as one of 'them', i.e. British people. Their practices with others unravel on the one hand, more subtle forms of racialization and on the other, more effortlessly performed civility towards diversity.

## 9 Ewa – perceived integration and ethnic self-segregation

The first time I visited Ewa in her flat was after we had arranged the initial interview. Ewa's neighbourhood is a residential area of terraced houses, inhabited mostly by white upper-working class people. Apart from a local small supermarket and a few take away shops there are no other services nearby. Even though she lives a short ten-minute walk from the main shopping street of the neighbourhood, I learnt that she does not go there very often and therefore, seems to be spatially distanced from the vibrant life of the neighbourhood's hub. The street she lives on is small and quiet. Her flat is situated at the back of one of the terraced houses and faces the row of other houses. It can be described as typical post-war British working-class housing with surrounding streets having similar designs. However, as soon as I entered Ewa's flat I felt I had crossed national boundaries and was transported back to Poland. She shares a small, two-bedroom flat with her Polish partner. She invited me into her living room with a small kitchenette attached to it. While she was making tea, I looked around. Her flat was very cosy and warm. Having studied Polish philology, Ewa was passionate about Polish art and literature. Her book collection contained, amongst others (also in English), some classic Polish novels and poems, and one of the paintings on a wall was an original work of a modern painter from Poland. Ewa is very creative and interested in painting and photography. She had decorated her flat with her own pictures and drawings she received from a (Polish) friend of hers. I was surrounded by Polish cultural heritage. She served me Polish fruit tea and I noticed that many of her food products were Polish, which I assumed she had purchased in Polish shops in Bristol. We sat down on a sofa by a table full of papers with some notes scribbled down and books in Polish. She apologised for the mess and explained that she had been preparing classes. Ewa has teaching qualifications and she realises her teaching potential through working as a private teacher on Saturdays and teaching Polish literature, grammar and history to Polish children aged ten to twelve. Thus, her micro cosmos in Bristol was dominated by practices entrenched in Polish tradition and culture. Although it was a rented flat, she had made it her Polish home.

Ewa's practices created a sense of 'normalcy' (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010) in Bristol. She did not limit those to the space of her flat. She created her symbolic comfort zone, surrounding herself with Polish friends. She lived with her Polish partner, whose English skills were better than Ewa's and whom she seemed to rely on in practical terms as he was in charge of their household. She read Polish news on the internet. Her 'Polish' flat and Bristolian Polish family were her comfort zone where she could express herself freely in her own language and where she could be herself. And this occurred not only on an emotional level but also on an intellectual level. Her educational background is appreciated by other Poles and she can continue teaching children subjects she is

passionate about. This gave her intellectual satisfaction. In the 'outside', British world, she was a shopkeeper in a supermarket. As she herself explained, she perceived this as a degradation of her socio-economic status since it is below the level of her professional qualifications: 'I don't identify myself with this job. I do it just to have income, that's it. I don't like it' (Field notes, December 2015). Her educational background and the skills that she acquired at university and as a teacher back in Poland were not transferable in British society where she could not teach without a British certificate and fluency in English. Thus, for eight years she had worked as a teacher so that once a week for three hours she could reclaim the prestige associated with the role she had had back in Poland. Moreover, she continued her passion for art through the networks she had created with other Poles who were likeminded people and with whom she could share interests and socialize.

Ewa seemed to rely mainly on Polish networks, which is a common path for Polish migrants who settle in a new country (Ryan et al., 2008), and create what Grzymała-Kazłowska (2005) called 'Little Poland'. She noted that these networks tend to weaken with time while cultural capital through language acquisition and education becomes stronger and Poles start entering the host country's labour market independently rather than continuing working with co-ethnics. Nevertheless, even though these strategies are usually observed in new migrants at the beginning of their migration journey, Ryan et al. pointed out that experiences may vary, and some Poles may continue their close bonds with other Polish migrants without extending their contacts much beyond their ethnic group. This is what happened to Ewa, who after 8 years of living in Britain has not developed fluency in English and has been relying on Polish networks. Her low level of English skills was an obstacle to her interactions with non-Poles:

'You know, it depends on the day and your attitude to the language. Sometimes I'm overly critical towards myself - I make grammar mistakes and I worry about it a lot, so much so I don't say anything, I get stuck and that's the end. And sometimes I have days when I don't care, so even when I don't speak correctly, they understand me anyway.'

First interview, October 2015

I observed her speaking English on a few occasions – when we met in the city centre and when she was forced to use it, either in a café or shops. The conversations were brief, but I noticed that her English was on a good communicative level. However, she lacked confidence, and this hindered her communication with people outside her Polish circle of friends. This is something White and Ryan called 'personal capital' (2008: 1472), which is manifested when migrants' self-assurance about their own capabilities is weak and they tend to be dependent on ethnic social networks and face obstacles in achieving cultural and economic integration into the society of settlement. Ewa



mentioned to me a few times that she wished she could express herself in English as fluently as in Polish, but believed it was impossible for her to learn the language to such a high level. Due to her poor language confidence, Ewa's interactions with cultural others were limited and her social relations were usually encompassed within the circle of other Poles. Ewa's socio-economic status in her two British and Polish worlds were separated. She was a shop assistant, a low-skilled working-class immigrant in one, and a respectable teacher and an artist in the latter. Ewa was aware of the effects of the limitations of her English language skills on her participation in British economic cultural and social life. She seemed to focus her everyday life on her Polish community. She did not express a sense of belonging to her neighbourhood but emphasized the importance of her Polish friends in her life. It was not spatially bounded but geographically dispersed, since her friends lived and met up in various parts of Bristol and the school where she taught was located on the other side of the city. Her Polish world, visible only for her and other Poles, was constructed in everyday routines through the institutions of the school, Polish online media and social media as well as personal networks. As Brubaker et al. (2006: 265-300) argued in their book on the Hungarian minority in a Romanian Transylvania town, the reproduction of the ethnic world in everyday life is not necessarily determined by the conscious willingness to preserve the culture but may result from social relations built by ethnic institutions. Ewa maintained her Polish world through her choices of networks driven by the ability to speak Polish and fulfil certain needs, i.e. partnership, friendship, interests and profession. She did not need to look for them in British networks. She also gained emotional support through strong ethnic ties.

Ewa seemed to feel very content and comfortable in the Polish environment. Her close friends organized gatherings regularly. I attended a couple of them with her. On one occasion it was a fancy-dress party and the theme related to socialist Poland. Most of her friends were her age or older and remembered socialist times. Everyone dressed up wearing 70s and 80s clothes and the hosts cooked Polish food traditionally served back then. They printed replicates of socialist posters and decorated the house with them. They played Polish music from the 60s to 80s, with many famous classic songs, to which they sang along. Ewa's friends appeared to be nostalgic, joking about the Polish socialist past, but longing for Polish culture at the same time by recalling stories from their experiences in socialist times. Ewa seemed to enjoy herself, but rather quietly, engaging mostly in one to one conversations with her closest friends. At some point in the kitchen a few female friends gathered and discussed the recent divorce of one of their mutual friends. Kasia, one of the women, said: 'She left her husband and four children and moved out to live with this... *Ciapaty!* [see page 60] She left her family! And for whom? For some dick, an Arab for sure!' Other women interrupted, agreeing with Kasia. Ewa eventually added: 'How can you leave your family?

She must have gone mad!’ All of them concluded that they were happy this woman had not been invited to the party (Field notes, March 2016). This episode from Ewa’s life illustrates the importance of Polish culture in her everyday routines. Events such as the party allowed her and her friends to maintain Polish customs and traditions in a safe and friendly environment. As argued elsewhere (Fox and Mogilnicka, 2017), racism expressed in the discussion about the friend’s relationship with a *Ciapaty* was a strategy to reassert Poles’ position in the British hierarchies of belongings. Moreover, it also served to reinforce certain Polish norms that Ewa followed. Ewa did not follow up with racist talk but picked up on the discourse on family values. Her friend’s decision to leave her husband for someone else was met with a disapproval from Ewa, who believed in traditional values of marriage and family life and, therefore, condemned the divorce. The event created a safe space in which common beliefs were reproduced in discourses that reinforced the sense of belonging to a Polish community.

Despite Ewa’s lived experiences of a segregated Polish world, she wanted to stay in Bristol for as long as possible and had plans to buy a property with her partner in the near future. Hence, in her case weak ‘bridging capital’ (Putnam, 2000) did not appear to be an obstacle to integration as she perceived it. As far as she was concerned, she had integrated into Bristol, having found her current job and having established a strong support network of Polish friends. Ewa had limited opportunities to encounter ethnic others due to her predominantly white British spatial context, as well as her practices of maintaining Polish networks. Her encounters were mostly limited to passing pedestrians on the street or coming into contact with them out of necessity, for example when she needed to call the city council, visit a doctor or go to a shop, all of which were preferably done in the presence of her Polish friends or her partner. Her workplace constituted the main social setting where she comes across cultural difference in a more meaningful way and where she negotiated her socio-economic status.

### A contact zone or a comfort zone?

Ewa worked in a large supermarket in her neighbourhood, situated relatively close to central Bristol, in an area with a small proportion of minorities and immigrants. It was a residential area and most people coming to the shop were regular customers, who usually recognized Ewa. Some of them, as she explained, had got to know her quite well over the last five years and sometimes she had small chats with them. Her relations with her colleagues were maintained on a professional level. Most of her conversations with them were brief and related to work. She did not socialize with them outside the workplace. She looked back with nostalgia to the times when she first started working there. Almost half of the employees were Polish back then and, according to Ewa, they were like a small family, supporting one another. After a while most of them had left and she had

not managed to create such strong bonds with the new staff members. At the time of the fieldwork, only three out of twenty-four staff members were Polish. She did not enjoy her work anymore. She complained that the job was physically demanding and boring. Moreover, she struggled to connect with other employees. She justified this by pointing out the age difference between her and them and claiming that they did not have much in common. I visited her on a couple of occasions in the shop and noticed that her lack of confidence in speaking in English contributed to the distance between her and other workers.

On one occasion, when I entered the shop and noticed her by the shelves, I overheard her introducing herself to a new woman in her early 20s. She did not seem to understand Ewa and asked her to repeat what she had said. Ewa did but immediately afterwards she went back to another shelf and continued stocking it. As soon as she saw me, she comfortably switched to Polish explaining to me that the woman was new. In our quick chat on the shop floor, Ewa was noticeably embarrassed. She emphasized that she worked there because it was necessary to have an income, even though she would prefer to enter the education sector, which would match her educational background and challenge her intellectually. She mentioned that she had been considering looking for jobs as a teaching assistant. A few months later she applied for two positions and had one interview, which I will elaborate on later in the chapter. The perception of her poor English language skills prevented her from taking the first steps for a few years. This was also a barrier in developing more meaningful interactions with her co-workers and customers. In the initial interview Ewa admitted that she had had difficulties understanding customers, especially at the beginning. Ewa claimed that her English language had improved over time, that she had learnt the work specific vocabulary and had grown used to conversations with customers and staff members. Hence, she felt comfortable at her workplace.

Nevertheless, from my observations, I gathered that Ewa avoided contact with others. At the till she was polite but focused on the products rather than the customers, giving the impression of being distant. In her study in Australia, Wise (2006: 176) noted that white Australian customers interpreted the behaviour of Chinese shop owners as impolite, even though they may have simply been shy or awkward. Indeed, the conversations Ewa had with her co-workers that I witnessed were very brief, related to the job and she appeared uninterested in talking to them.

Today I picked Ewa up from work, I waited for her to shop for food before going to her flat. When she reached the till, she was served by her Spanish male colleague. He asked her about her plans for the day, but she did not understand the question. A few people gathered behind her in the queue. It was quiet, and everyone could hear them

chatting. I noticed she looked nervous and avoided eye contact with anyone, packing food into bags. She replied to him, flustered, that the day at work had been busy. He looked at her confused, while she remained focused on her shopping. He did not clarify the question and continued scanning her items. She paid in a hurry and left, wishing him a good day. Although she still appeared to misunderstand conversations, she was one of the most experienced staff members, and looked confident on the shop floor and behind the till.

Field notes, November 2015

Ewa's workplace was where she experienced her most regular connections with the world outside her Polish comfort zone. Her co-workers were international, and the customers were mainly white British, but minorities and migrants were not uncommon. This was the place where she frequently had to communicate in English, however, she found strategies to keep it to the necessary minimum. Having said this, she seemed to get along with all her colleagues, regardless of their ethnic or racial background. Ewa said that she got along best with her manager, who originally came to Britain from India, because they had known each other the longest. Her workplace, which was her contact zone with cultural others, had become her comfort zone, where interactions were predictable and customers and colleagues were well known to her.

There was, however, one category of the cultural Other who Ewa felt annoyance and discomfort towards: Muslim female customers. As she recalled: 'At our supermarket, we have these Muslim women, you know, the fully covered ones. They're very slow, they don't know how to use money, they're often illiterate, right?' (First Interview, October 2015). Ewa did not hide her annoyance, but she was also frustrated by the 'English' customers who tolerated them, as she continued: 'I've seen loads of times how English people lose their patience with them: they're queueing, and the Muslim women are taking their time, packing their bags very slowly. But [the English], you know, clench their teeth and try to smile, but you can tell they're pissed off.' Ewa was irritated by the 'tolerant' attitude of English people towards Muslim women. This tolerant approach was criticized by her on other occasions, always in relation to Muslim people.

### Urban civility and racialized practices

Once Ewa called me to have a catch up over a coffee in her favourite café, Costa, in the city centre, on a busy shopping street. It was mid-January and we were catching up about the Christmas holidays. Ewa liked debating social and cultural affairs and soon the conversation turned to broader issues of culture, identity and patriotism. Ewa's worldviews reflected Polish Catholic norms. Even though she claimed not to believe in the institution of the Church in Poland, which, she thought,

was corrupt, she was a religious person and her perceptions were quite traditional. She was convinced that mixing cultures, religions and customs was 'dangerous' and should be avoided. According to Ewa, meditation and Buddhism were Eastern practices which Western people did not understand and blindly followed. Despite not condemning homosexuality, she perceived it as a fashionable thing to do in the modern world and believed that this 'current trend' would pass with time. In contrast, although she spoke about Buddhism and homosexuality rather lightly and appeared not to be troubled by it, Islam was a foreign cultural and religious influence that frightened her. In January 2016 there was significant media attention on the so called 'refugee crisis', with some portraying them as bogus migrants and a threat to British society (Parker, 2015). Ewa expressed similar concerns about Muslim newcomers and established Muslim communities in Britain and perceived them as a threat to an imagined European way of life. While we were sitting in the café, she expressed her concerns:

'I thought Germany would finally realise the mistake they made by allowing refugees in [referring to the incident in Cologne] (...). This *multi-kulti* [a pejorative colloquial language used in Poland to criticize multiculturalism] is not working and that's a big problem, Europe is under a cultural threat (...). If someone does something bad then [pause], what I don't like is that they don't call it like it is, they don't say it directly: this is wrong, and it can't be done this way. They rather say that we all have to love others, we all have to be nice to each other, everyone wipes their asses with this word 'tolerance', you know? When I hear this word, I feel this sort of *przesyt* [saturation], we've lost ourselves in it, you can't tolerate everything and everyone, because you simply can't. (...) You know I'm a traditionalist to some extent and believe that tradition should be preserved.'

Field notes, January 2016

Ewa's views on the 'refugee crisis' and the position of Muslim minorities in Britain bore similarities to racialized discourses in the Polish (Buchowski, 2016) and UK media (Parker, 2015). Nonetheless, Ewa's discourse expressed more complex practices than perpetrator/victim racism, from a member of the majority directed towards a powerless minority group. Firstly, her symbolic exclusion of Muslim minorities contradicts her own experiences in Britain. She was an EU citizen whose position in society at the time of the fieldwork was 'tolerated'. Even though she was the cultural Other stigmatized in some British media (Spigelman, 2013), she positioned herself as one of 'us', as a good citizen (Anderson, 2013) together with those from Britain and other Christian European countries and constructed against Muslim minorities. Her discourse about the dangers of mixing cultures was

not critical of her own status in British society. She did not perceive herself as the cultural Other, (not)mixing with British natives. Her Polish cultural influence was not questioned as a threat to British culture. Rather she saw white and Christian identity as a shared one, in which Poles seamlessly blend in and in which Muslim minorities do not fit. Implicitly she drew on her shared whiteness with the British majority to insert herself in the racial hierarchy in Britain, a practice observed amongst other East European citizens as well (Fox et al., 2015, Fox, 2013). Her own everyday life focused on Polish culture and networks, where she hardly ever mingled with others, thus giving expression to a form of lived segregation, for which she in turn criticized Muslim people. Culturally she lived a separate life to majority British society and yet she would not consider Poles as either a threat or as a segregated minority. Popular discourses that stigmatize Muslim people were reflected in Ewa's practices, without consideration of her own ambivalent position. Moreover, her status revealed her white privilege in Britain, since it was relatively easy for her to be invisible while maintaining Polish culture. Thus, as European and Christian (and white) she felt implicitly that she deserved to be in Britain more than Muslim minorities coming from outside Europe.

One of our conversations took place in the city centre, in a café where people of different cultures and religions mixed in their mundane practices. Paradoxically, while Ewa was expressing her fear of Muslims, we were sitting two tables away from a Black Muslim family, a man, a woman and two children. Ewa did not seem to take notice of them. She used boundary making discourse in Polish in a spatial context, identified by Laurier and Philo (2006) as a convivial place created by friendly and reciprocal gestures of individuals. Jones et al. (2015) suggested that these public commercial spaces generate indifference towards ethnic difference through familiarity. Yet my data suggests otherwise. Ewa had definitely become accustomed to difference over time, and not paying any attention to this family proved that the ethnic difference she encountered every day was something she had learnt to be a part of everyday life as an ordinary and banal feature of it. Racist discourses can be deployed at the same moment as an ethic of indifference (Tonkiss, 2006) is expressed. The fear of the imaginary Other persisted while Ewa got on with her life, being indifferent towards the threatening Other in close proximity to her in her everyday practices. Civil indifference does not eliminate racism (Valentine, 2008). As my data suggest, racist talk does not interfere with practices of urban civility either. Civil practices in public spaces in diverse areas are not necessarily a reflection of conviviality as some authors may suggest (Radice, 2016, Jones et al., 2015). Civility does not translate into acceptance of difference but may reflect a mutual agreement to share space, that allows others to become invisible in a diverse crowd (Simmel, 2002 [1903]). The vignette illustrates that people may use these public spaces to express hostility, and share concerns and

fears, without disturbing the urban etiquette of indifference, or the apparently accepted 'throwntogetherness' (Massey, 2005: 149) of varieties of cultures.

As I discuss below, these biases are more likely to be in the way of any forms of more meaningful and less fleeting interactions with the stigmatized Other.

### Racial displacement

On the final occasion when I interviewed Ewa we met in central Bristol at the Harbour side. It was a sunny warm day and we walked outside for a while before sitting down on a bench to conduct the exit interview. We had not seen each other for a while and I was keen to find out about her job-hunting as a teaching assistant. I was pleased to find out that despite the difficulties with English she had been persisting in applying for positions and she had even been offered an interview. She said that it had not gone very well, though, and she doubted she would receive a job offer. When I prompted her for more details, she added with relief in her voice: 'Anyway, I wouldn't have taken it'. I asked why not, and she replied: 'It was a school in an area where there were only black children, hardly any white kids, just black ones and I felt [pause], I don't know, I felt weird, somehow uncomfortable'. She shook her head in disbelief and said:

'I'm glad I didn't get this job. I wouldn't like to work there. I'm not racist but 99% of the children being black is too much for me. I don't understand this culture and I don't want to be part of it. I almost felt as if they were racist towards me.'

Field notes, March 2016

In Ewa's description of the event, it was clear that she had stepped out of her comfort zone in the school where she had become a racial minority and where she had come into direct contact with the unfamiliar Other. Even though she lived in a diverse city, her contact with racial and ethnic minorities was rather sporadic and was rarely experienced beyond her white habitus, defined by Bonilla-Silva et al. (2006) as embodied racialized socialization process that reinforces racial views, emotions, feelings and tastes. The racial displacement in a spatial setting where she was a minority unsettled Ewa. Later that day, in the exit interview, when explicitly asked about diversity, she claimed that she enjoyed it, especially the variety of cultures in Bristol:

'You know, you can try various cuisines from other countries, you can get to know other countries' customs. It's interesting, very nice, I like it. People learn languages (...) overall, the cultural exchange enriches people, I like it.'

Exit interview, March 2016

Ewa liked many aspects of diversity in Bristol. She enjoyed international food, restaurants and the multicultural streetscapes of the city. However, the incident at the school and her discourses about Muslim minorities suggest that her appreciation of diversity was maintained only if the racial and religious others were kept at a safe distance. As long as she did not feel threatened by their presence, she accepted them. The anxieties caused by the racial demographics of the school illustrate that valuing diversity may not necessarily reflect perceptions about the stigmatized Others. A similar observation was made by Burke (2012) in her study on a diverse neighbourhood in Chicago, where she claimed that celebrating diversity did not exclude colour-blind ideology or ambivalent attitudes towards racial difference. Ewa's example shows the need for research that scrutinises everyday living with difference. My methodology allowed me to unravel the intricacies in perceptions and experiences of Ewa's lived diversities, i.e. how the anxieties and fears about black bodies (Fanon, 2008) co-existed with the practices of indifference and civility towards diversity.

## Conclusion

Polish citizens in Britain can immerse themselves in the life of the Polish community without much engagement with other social actors from outside their co-ethnic circle. However, Ewa's lived segregation was not interpreted by her as such. On the contrary, Ewa had, as far as she was concerned, integrated into British society. As a white European citizen, she had blended in with residents of her predominantly white British working class, neighbourhood. Economically, she had left the migration labour sector to work in the local area where she had regular contact with local residents and quite a diverse team of co-workers. More importantly though, she had established strong ties with other Polish migrants living in Bristol who provided her with practical and emotional support as well as with intellectual satisfaction as a teacher. Thus, her engagement in British life was fairly marginal, reduced to economic participation in a sector of the labour market which did not match her educational background. Thus, she lived two lives simultaneously: one within the Polish community where she feels comfortable without a language barrier and where she could realise her intellectual potential, and the second one in the British context where she experienced downward occupation mobility and still struggled to communicate freely in English. She therefore juggled the two worlds, where her class and ethnic identities varied and sometimes collided. This occurred when she was confronted with diversity in Bristol, which is spatially segregated and pejoratively racialized. She felt threatened and uncomfortable when she visited a school for an interview where the majority of children were black. Even though she would have liked to change her job, she was willing to choose her low skilled job over economic and social mobility in a social setting where she would have been a racial minority and where her perceived



superior status towards black minorities would have been challenged. The material advantage was less important than the psychological disadvantage, the perceived degradation in status.

Her practices focused on maintaining ties with the Polish community did not necessarily contradict her process of adjustment and integration with British society, which she implicitly defined as white and Christian. The structural segregation manifested in classed and racialized neighbourhoods in Bristol seemed to contribute to her understandings of diversity. She lived in a multicultural city, but diversity is unequally distributed spatially, and she had managed to avoid areas with high percentages of minorities of colour since moving to Bristol. This demonstrates how it is relatively easy for white migrants who rarely experience diversity to feel integrated into British society. The hierarchies of belonging in Britain that are reinforced spatially allow Poles' racialized practices to remain unchallenged.

In the next two chapters, I will introduce the negotiations of difference by Marcin and Monika, a married couple living in another white working class neighbourhood. Contrary to Ewa, they have improved their socio-economic status since the arrival in Britain and feel integrated, economically and culturally, with the white majority, while still maintaining Polish networks.

## 10 Marcin – the blend of crude and nuanced forms of racisms

Marcin has invited me over to his house to watch a football game. It was a qualifying match between Ireland and Poland for the European Championship. The match was important for Polish fans, it was the final game in the qualifiers and the Polish team had to win it in order to advance to the European Championship next summer in France. I came a bit late, after the match had started. Marcin and his four male friends were gathered in the living room. The men were wearing football t-shirts and scarves in national white and red colours, with the coat of arms of Poland, a white, crowned eagle. They introduced themselves to me and welcomed me warmly but very soon turned their attention back to the game. I sat between them, next to Marcin and his best friend, Marek. Marek and other two men, Michal and Jakob, looked to be about Marcin's age, that is, in their early 30s. There was one man, Witold, in his 60s. I found out later that he was Marek's father-in-law who had come to Bristol a couple of months earlier to babysit Marek and his wife's children. I was the only woman in the group. The situation of performed hegemonic masculinities, with five men drinking beer and following the game closely in a loud and expressive manner, intimidated me at first. However, they also seemed to be conscious of my presence throughout the match. Every time they cursed they would turn to me and apologize for their bad language. I realised a few times that they had bitten their tongues while commenting on the game. It took perhaps twenty minutes for all of us to relax and overcome the awkwardness. I soon surprised myself by joining them in supporting the Polish team. Every time they scored I felt the same excitement and cheered the team with everyone else. The enthusiasm was contagious, and I found it difficult not to join in. They commented on the game constantly in an entertaining way, making sarcastic comments and laughing throughout.

In this relaxed atmosphere Witold told some racist jokes. At one point, breaking a few minutes silence, he said: 'The one by the goal doesn't look Irish.' (He referred to a dual-heritage Irish goalkeeper). Marcin replied with a sarcastic tone: 'What? How?! Thoroughbred Irish! Ginger!'. Everyone started laughing, then Marek added: 'Right! He is looking somewhat tanned!' Everyone continued laughing including Witold, though he still looked puzzled and confused. Eventually, he added with a slight doubt in his voice, trying to figure out the origins of the goalkeeper: '*ciapaty?!'* [see page 60]. No one said anything, the others appeared to ignore the comment and focused again on the game. After some time, they started criticizing the referee for his (in their

opinion – unjustly) favourable decision towards the Irish team, and accordingly questioning his impartiality. I asked them where the referee was from. Jakob replied: ‘Good question, I don’t know’. Michal searched on the Internet and confirmed that the referee was Turkish. As soon as he said it, Witold made the following remark with disapproval in his voice: ‘Turkish? Could they have not chosen anyone else?!’ It was meant to be a joke, and he looked around eagerly to see if he had provoked a reaction but again, his comment went unnoticed and the others continued conversations between themselves about different topics. Witold, however, persisted, adding a few minutes later: ‘I know why they have chosen a Turkish guy. Because he came here with all those Syrians!’ He started laughing out loud, even though no one joined him. After a while Witold made another comment, this time about the Irish goalkeeper again: ‘Indeed, he looks tanned...is he Irish?’ Someone replied ‘Yeah’ while staring at the screen. Then Witold responded: ‘Yeah right! He is as Irish as a black guy is English!’ He started laughing at his own joke but again no one else reacted. A few minutes later Marcin searched for something on his phone. He started giggling and showed me pictures that had made him laugh. They were memes about Muslims, e.g. showing Islamist extremists with a caption: ‘the big bang theory’. I was puzzled and did not know how to react. I smiled back awkwardly, and he showed me a couple more memes. He stopped soon, perhaps because of my reserved reaction or simply because he was interested in returning to the game. The memes were only shared with me and no other man in the room noticed our short exchange. They continued watching the game and discussing it among themselves.

Field notes, October 2015

Some of the literature (Wessendorf, 2013, Valentine, 2008) conceptualising everyday encounters with difference emphasizes that in the private realm when people interact with co-ethnics, prejudiced opinions are more easily expressed since there is less fear of reprimand for not following the expected code of conduct required in public spaces. Indeed, Witold felt comfortable making racist jokes. The private environment of Marcin’s house, the presence of only Polish friends and me, the nationalistic character of the event and the racial and ethnic differences Witold continually pointed out could have served as a platform for all of them to become involved in racist practices, a common practice observed amongst football fans on football grounds (Back et al., 2001). Nonetheless, in the setting of Marcin’s house, no one else seemed to be interested in following up on Witold’s remarks, they noticeably ignored him. Moreover, by making a comment about the ‘thoroughbred Ginger’ or ‘somewhat tanned’ Irish dual heritage goal keeper, Marcin and others

seemed to have laughed *at* Witold rather than laughing *with* him at his racist joke. I sensed a slightly patronising attitude towards him. His surprise and confusion about the goalkeeper of dual heritage was perceived by the other men as naïve, since encountering black men was not a novelty for them as they all had lived in Britain for about 10 years. It illustrated a gap between them and Witold in the understanding of diversity. They did not engage in the racialized discussion most likely because it did not reflect their perceptions and experiences of multicultural Britain. Perhaps their lack of response may have been affected by my presence and was a self-policing strategy in the group. It may have resulted from a perceived need to maintain some form of political correctness in the presence of a stranger that Witold, as a newcomer, was not aware of. However, this was soon interrupted by Marcin, who shared racist memes with me, excluding the others from the communication. Thus, the setting encouraged some racist remarks from Marcin, unrelated to Witold's talk, while others followed a code of civil inattention in my presence. The variety of strategies expressed during one event in an intimate setting unravel the complex understandings of 'race' and ethnicity that are acted upon in everyday life. In Marcin's case I will elaborate on how urban civility towards others is intertwined with strategies of exclusion. His example illustrates how performed civil inattention may express avoidance of the Other and be accompanied by racialized practices. However, apart from the crude forms of racism, Marcin has also developed the more nuanced strategies of exclusion such as migration controls towards people from outside EU, based on the perceived shared belonging to the white Christian majority.

### British citizenship and Polish patriotism

Marcin arrived in Britain in 2006 without knowing any English. His brother, who already lived in London, helped him to find a job in the construction sector, one of the main industries in which Polish economic migrants found employment (Anderson et al., 2006). A few months later Marcin moved to Bristol where he was soon employed in the engineering company he still worked for at the time of the fieldwork. He was first recruited as a labourer in their warehouse but over the years he received promotions to more advanced positions. Eventually, he became responsible for testing machinery for clients which involved travelling around the world to clients' companies. He had a good income, a stable position and had developed relatively good English. He and his wife, Monika, managed to get a mortgage for a house two years prior to the fieldwork and had a financially comfortable life secured for their teenage daughter. Over the nine years of his stay in Britain, Marcin had moved up the social mobility ladder from working in an ethnic low-skilled and low paid labour sector to a specialized British industry in a company where he, as the only Pole, was an expert in his area. Both Marcin and Monika had fully integrated in economic terms, but they had also adjusted to the social and cultural life of British society. Without relying on Polish networks,

with a good level of English language competency and British acquaintances at their workplaces, they had made their lives in Bristol and called it their home. They were not preoccupied with saving money and sending remittances back to Poland as many temporary or new immigrants may do to support their families (Eade et al., 2007). Without the pressure of going back they could enjoy a lifestyle which was a mix of both British and Polish traditions. These were maintained simultaneously, mainly by Monika, his wife. As I will discuss in the next chapter, she engaged in practices that were perceived to be middle class white British and introduced some of them at home. These varied from experimenting with international cuisine to reprimanding Marcin's explicitly racist comments that she believed were not acceptable in British society.

In the first interview Marcin already struck me as someone who paid significant attention to maintaining a Polish identity. He was proud of being Polish and separated the Polish population in Britain from the category of non-citizens (Anderson, 2013), i.e. as newcomers perceived by the majority as unlawful, lazy, and with intentions to misuse the welfare system. In the discussions about migration he expressed claims about migrants in Britain that revealed his position of relative power:

'I understand that everyone may need help from the state. But if someone does it in a plain and obvious way! A few years ago, in a college, I met a guy from Djibouti, a small country in Africa. The guy told me that he would help me get a council flat, I just needed to meet certain criteria, that I worked fourteen hours a week. Then I would get a flat and *benefity*<sup>11</sup> [benefits]. You know, this group of people is organized to get benefits from the state and it's not cool. Because you know, this is taxes, mine and yours. It's not cool at all.'

First interview, June 2015

In the same interview, he expressed nationalist claims about his Polish identity: 'I'm interested in Polish politics. Every day I watch one and a half hours of Polish news. Politics is what I like the most'. Later he added: 'You know, I'm a bit patriotic, I would prefer buying only Polish products but, unfortunately, they are too expensive' (First interview, June 2015). Even though Marcin had acquired British citizenship, he reinforced his Polish identity in the interview. However, other migrants were discursively stigmatized as non-citizens in Britain (Anderson, 2013), i.e. 'benefit scroungers', threatening the welfare system. By differentiating himself from such 'non-citizens', Marcin sought to claim a contrasting status of the good citizen. He, perhaps due to his British

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<sup>11</sup> English borrowing, the correct word for *benefits* in Polish is *zasilki* but Poles in Britain tend to use the 'Polonized English words' (Nowicka, 2010: 22) and the word *benefity* is common to use.

naturalization, felt permitted to decide who belonged and who did not to the society. These claims were implicitly racialized and classed and revealed his understanding of hierarchies of belonging in Britain. They were based on perceived values of hard work and contributions to society in economic terms, which certain migrants were perceived not to have. The migration of people of colour from outside the European Union was interpreted as a financial burden. They were discursively constructed as failed-citizens, involved in fraudulent activities that exploit the welfare system. These beliefs, which reflected hierarchies of belonging based on 'race' and class, were openly expressed. In fact, Marcin claimed to be racist and did not seem to be embarrassed to say so.

### I think I'm racist

'I think I'm racist', Marcin stated suddenly. I was puzzled and asked: 'Towards whom?' He replied: 'Towards everyone who cannot behave themselves [short pause] I mean *Murzyni* [black people], and Islamists.' The confession followed a conversation about the so-called refugee crisis. We were in a car on the way to a shopping centre and Marcin started the discussion, emphasizing concerns he had about the large number of refugees coming to Europe. Once we were done with shopping, while walking back to his car in the car park, Marcin continued our previous conversation:

'I remember it well, back when I was in France and spoke to one Muslim guy and I remember it exactly, what he said, that they all will kick us out! And I asked how? And he said: "We will be reproducing!" [short pause] When I was young I was a punk, an idealist. Racism? What racism!? Love towards everyone! It's different now. I'm telling you, I have changed.'

Field notes, October 2015

This self-proclaimed racism was not new to me. From our initial interview onwards, Marcin openly talked about his concerns about people of colour and Muslim minorities. Throughout the fieldwork he would raise the topic with me every now and again. Discussing the so-called refugee crisis acted as an ice-breaker. I would never prompt him to discuss these issues. Whenever I accompanied him in his daily routines, he was the one who initiated discussions about diversity and the (problematic in his understanding) place of black and Muslim people in British society. One Saturday I spent over three hours with Marcin, familiarizing myself with his weekend routine. I arrived at his house quite early in the morning. His wife, Monika, had to go to work so we dropped off their daughter at a Polish school, then went shopping to a shopping mall. Afterwards, we visited a couple of Polish food shops, where he bought traditional Polish *pierogi* (dumplings) and *kluski* (potato dumplings), remarking that these were his favourite foods. Finally, we went to another commercial centre in a

different neighbourhood in the north of Bristol where we walked around a few shops and had a coffee in a café before picking up his daughter from school and going back to his house. Even though we spoke in Polish all the time, there was no sense of estrangement. Marcin felt comfortable in the crowd of other consumers, and he knew the places we visited well. In the café, we sat down and had a conversation about our experiences in Britain, how we have changed over the years, what kind of jobs we used to do, where we used to live etc. He told me that he enjoyed living in Bristol and was happy overall in his predominantly white working class neighbourhood in north Bristol. I told him where I lived (a middle-class area, predominantly white), and he said: 'Yeah, I like it a lot. The main street, with all those nice shops, yeah, it's nice over there. People dress nicely and elegant, and it is so clean. So different to where I work. The neighbourhood is, ehmm, you know, it's black and dirty over there'. I admitted that I was not familiar with his workplace's neighbourhood. The middle-class neighbourhood he idealised in the conversation was his favourite place in Bristol, but it was not affordable. We then started discussing places in the city for going out and where we usually hang out with our friends. I mentioned a well-known pub in a diverse neighbourhood, near to the city centre. He shook his head with disapproval. Then he smiled pensively and added: 'I used to go there a lot'. I asked 'Who with? Other Polish friends?' 'It varied, Poles, Spanish guys, I even knew one "*Muzin*"<sup>12</sup> [he laughed]. He was alright, quite funny. When I used to call him *nigger* [in English] he had nothing against it, he didn't take himself too seriously.'

Marcin's language and discourse about people of colour, Muslim minorities and refugees revealed the discursive construction of boundaries between 'us' and 'them' on the grounds of racial and religious difference. He was preoccupied with the Muslim minority in Britain, suggesting also that the so-called refugee crisis was a broader European problem. He, therefore, constructed his belonging in British society by drawing on his European Christian, white, identity (Parutis, 2011). Marcin's talk about minorities seemed to reflect a panicked form of nationalism (Hage, 2003), the worry for the nation reified in a discourse of protection of its borders against newcomers. He discussed refugees from the standpoint of the majority, emphasizing his belonging to British society, implicitly understood by him as white and Christian. This was also evident in his comments about minorities and migrants of colour. 'Black people and Muslims' are labelled as those who 'can't behave themselves'. He called his black acquaintance a *Muzin*, using an infantilized version of a term *Murzyn*, which served to belittle the man. He further used the word 'nigger' to refer to him. The supposed lack of response from his black friend was interpreted by Marcin as meaning that was at ease with the racist slur. Black people and Muslim minorities seemed to represent to

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<sup>12</sup> A diminutive form of *Murzyn*; it carries belittling connotations through phonetic infantilization.

Marcin 'non- and failed-citizens' (Anderson, 2013), those who disrupt the values and norms of the nation and are, therefore, undesirable. These claims were further reinforced by his subjective understandings of racial and class divisions of space in the city of Bristol that were demonstrated in his descriptions of various neighbourhoods. The affluent predominantly white neighbourhood was perceived as clean and 'classy', whereas the 'dirty', i.e. black, area of his workplace was despised by Marcin. He used 'purifying' language in conjunction with class and race. The wealthy area was predominantly white upper- and middle-class British, whereas the latter had a higher level of poverty and a more ethnically and 'racially' diverse population. 'Dirty' was used in parallel with 'black', suggesting that people of colour are the 'polluting' Other (Douglas, 2002).

Importantly, Marcin suggested that he had become racist in Britain (see also Nowicka, 2017: 11-12) by saying that he used to be open-minded to difference when he first arrived in Britain. He sounded patronising towards his young self, making his 'idealistic' beliefs sound naïve and unrealistic. Nevertheless, having observed him in various social settings I noticed that he often expressed civil inattention to racial and religious difference. Despite racist perceptions, he had learnt in Britain to act in a civil manner towards the differences he did not otherwise appear to accept in his own analyses of diversity in Britain. In his everyday encounters he often either followed a code of urban civility or showed strategies of avoidance of the defiled Other (Seidman, 2013). These will be discussed in the next section.

### Civil inattention and avoidance of difference

The day when Marcin claimed to be racist I observed him in multiple sites: at the Polish school, in shopping malls, and going to Polish shops and a café. Each one was very specific and required Marcin to 'perform' different social roles. The Polish school was a familiar ethnic space where he had become acquainted with a few other parents. He greeted a couple of them when we entered the school but as soon as his daughter went to her class, we left the school grounds without engaging in any conversations with others. Later, in the car, he felt comfortable discussing the so-called 'refugee crisis' with me, which he continued in the public space of a shopping mall's car park. When we then visited another shopping centre a few minutes later in the busy peak hours when many customers were there, Marcin followed the rules of urban civil etiquette. He demonstrated civil inattention, 'giv[ing] to another enough visual notice to demonstrate that [he] appreciates that the other is present (...), while at the next moment withdrawing [his] attention from [the other]' (Goffman, 1966: 84). He was polite to the shop assistants and indifferent to the diverse crowd of customers, thus detaching his practice from the racialized discourse we had a few minutes earlier. He looked serious, did not engage in any conversations with people around him but remained polite and friendly. However, half an hour later in the familiar space of Polish shops he acted differently.



He was very friendly, charming female shopkeepers with jokes and brief chats. When I observed him in the settings of shopping malls, he acted in a civil manner towards others. However, only in the Polish shops did he appear to be relaxed enough to approach people around him and initiate conversations. The convivial practices in the Polish sites contrasted with the more reserved behaviour in the malls. The nature of the small shop settings, the language and the familiarity with the shop assistants and the Polish food made it easier for Marcin to connect with others over perceived commonalities. We then drove to a café, where he again switched his behaviour to more formal and brief interactions with others, while waiting in a queue and ordering coffees. When we sat down in the same busy café where people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds meet and rub along together (Jones et al., 2015), he continued his racialized discourse in Polish about minorities of colour.

The various strategies Marcin applied were contingent upon the social setting he found himself in. He was able to adjust quickly to different circumstances and act according to the prevalent norms in a particular social site. However, while outwardly following an ethic of indifference in commercial sites, Marcin often continued to engage in a racialized discourse in Polish, creating an intimate and safe microenvironment within these larger public spaces. In the settings of a café, Marcin performed a role of a 'good British citizen' by following the code of civil inattention, while expressing racist opinions without his British audience noticing it. The 'front stage performance' (Goffman, 1971a) was not disrupted by racialized rhetoric, unexpected and unnoticeable by spectators. Being able to speak in Polish allowed Marcin to blur the front and back stage division and to continue to publicly articulate his opinions, which contradicted prevailing norms without disturbing them. My methodology of accompanying Marcin throughout various settings during the day enabled me to observe these contradictions and explore how his practices reflected the perceived codes of behaviour in given sites. I was therefore able to contextualise the performed civility and gain understandings of how it was linked with Marcin's perceptions of race and ethnicity. The civil inattention reflected his awareness of political correctness and the necessity to comply with it (Valentine and Harris, 2016). It did not translate, however, into the banality of racial and ethnic difference in his life. As he clarified it to me in his final interview: 'They [the Brits] know they have made a mistake. Poland is racist, but we should be proud of it. They understand this and now they appreciate it' (Exit Interview, February 2016).

Thus, he was aware that his opinion was *wrong* considering the normative principles of British multicultural policies and that it should not be voiced publicly. Yet, these policies appear to be interpreted as a problematic restriction rather than an actual reflection of his (and as he claimed, other white British people's) views. In fact, he asserts that he made a sincere attempt in the past

to overcome differences between people. He used to go to a pub in a diverse neighbourhood and even had a black 'friend'. Nevertheless, as Marcin stated, his further personal experiences with minorities of colour verified his worldviews and reinforced the idea that there are fundamental differences between 'us' and 'them'. He described the following situation to me in the initial interview:

'Once we were on our way to work, my brother and I. It was 6am. We encountered *Murzyni* [black people], they first wanted some fags from us, then money, and at the end our rucksacks. They didn't get us though, we managed to quickly escape. But this was the moment when [short pause] I don't think it was a coincidence that they were black, you know, it's not nice (...) but you know you can make your own opinion after an event like this one. Especially when everyone who has been here longer, perhaps doesn't force their opinion upon me but [pause]. And you know, when it has nothing to do with you [short pause]. I mean, at the beginning it had nothing to do with me, I didn't care at all. Well, but later I was thinking, damn it, actually there is something in it. It's not that nowadays I hate them but [short pause] we don't like each other, that's how I would describe it [a subtle smile].'

First Interview, June 2015

Despite his prejudice, Marcin was capable of following norms of urban civility in public settings, where interactions were superficial and intimacy was not required. However, in a more intimate environment, where he came across difference, the civil behaviour towards people of colour did not express indifference to difference but rather subtle strategies of avoidance of contact.

Once, I went with Marcin to a martial arts training session, which he attended regularly. The group was perhaps twenty to twenty five people. I could not tell the nationality of those present, the only obvious characteristic being they were predominantly white and male, with only two British South Asian men and two women. The training session lasted one and a half hours. They trained in pairs or in threes. After each exercise, the trainer (a white British male) asked them to swap partners so that every time each person would practice moves with someone else. I noticed that Marcin always attempted to train with the same three men, who he clearly felt most comfortable with. On a few occasions he could not avoid training with random people. Knowing his opinion about minorities, I was keen to observe his interactions with the two South Asian men. But even when he was close to them, he managed not to train with them. The interactions between Marcin and a few other men, who I later found out were East European, seemed convivial, he was laughing and chatting to them during and after the training session. Nevertheless, I noticed that he avoided training with or

speaking to the only two South Asian men. After the class, on the way to his car he explained to me what the training meant to him and how much he enjoyed it. I said: 'I noticed that you trained with three guys mainly'. He interrupted and replied with a slight irritation in his voice: 'Yeah, because some don't get it! For example, this tall guy, '*ciapaty*' [see page 60], the Indian guy. He doesn't get anything, completely nothing! It's better to train with guys who are better than you or at least on your level.' I then asked: 'What about the big guy, the one who was chatting to you afterwards?' 'Sergei? I think he is from Montenegro, he is OK' (Field notes, November 2015).

Although Marcin suggested that the choice of the training partners was driven by their skills, having just observed him I suspected it was also partially motivated by their ethnic background. When I asked about his training strategy, he immediately pointed out the inability of one of the two South Asian men. He did not mention the other one, who seemed to be more experienced and capable in the training. He also did not try to explain why he preferred not to train with the other students. The only one he stressed as unable to learn was one of the two men of colour in the group. When I asked about one of the strongest and more advanced men in the training session, he immediately referred to his nationality, followed by an approval that 'he was OK.' This discourse happened immediately after an hour and a half long training session during which Marcin consistently avoided training with the two South Asian men. The supposed civility, performed during the training session, could be interpreted as a subtle strategy to avoid encountering an uncomfortable difference without being noticeably inappropriate (at least for the majority of the audience, the targets of Marcin's hostility may well have recognised it). Urban civility in this case was not an example of recognizing and welcoming difference but a concealed avoidance of the other. The setting of any martial arts training is peculiar since it involves a level of physical proximity to strangers, which in other circumstances would be inappropriate and unacceptable. Wulfhorst et al. (2014: 1798) argued that the bodily experience of capoeira, another martial art, creates a space for inter-cultural bonding, which they call 'intimate multiculturalism'. However, strategies of avoidance of difference may be also observed. Marcin was aware of what the appropriate behaviour in the semi-public space was and he behaved accordingly. He was able to act in a civil way and interacted with everyone in a polite manner despite holding prejudiced opinions.

## Conclusion

Living in British society for nine years had taught Marcin how to negotiate multiculturalism in his everyday life. His immediate environment and social networks were mostly white and he hardly ever encountered racial or religious difference. The neighbourhood where he lived, the areas where he shopped and spent his free time, were predominantly white working and middle class. Even though his workplace was situated in a diverse neighbourhood, his work settings were

predominantly white British, as were his neighbours whilst the circle of his closest friends was Polish. In his daily prosaic practices he did not have much contact with ethnic, racial or religious difference, other than fleeting encounters in shopping malls or cafés, where he acted in a civil manner. This usually demonstrated a genuine indifference towards others.

Although his engagement with ethnic minorities was limited, he had a strong view about the place of people of colour and Muslim minorities in British society. He constructed his identity against them and claimed a dominant position on the basis of being white, European and Christian. His status as an EU citizen (before he acquired British citizenship) reinforced his entitlement to live in Britain, in the sense that his stay in Britain was legal, he paid taxes, worked hard and, therefore, blended in well with society. His claims were consistent with prevailing media discourses about valuable hard-working citizens (Patrick, 2012). He seemed to perceive himself as integrated. In his everyday routines he was engaged in the life of the Polish community and maintained an ethnic culture, while at the same time having developed professional bonds with the British majority at his workplace. Due to shared whiteness, he believed he had become an invisible and integral part of British society, in contrast to people of colour and the Muslim population, who are perceived as a threatening or unintegrated other. His racialized discourses unravel his understandings of who should and should not belong to British society, notwithstanding his ability to affect a stance of civil indifference to difference in public.

His wife Monika, whose portrait is illustrated in the next chapter, also emphasized her racial and religious identity juxtaposed to Muslim migrants and minorities of colour. However, she condemned crude racism from Marcin and other Poles if she came across it. She believed in tolerance towards minorities in Britain and reflected this perception in everyday encounters with cultural others. Moreover, white Britishness she aspired to intersected with class. Thus, she demonstrated an awareness of class hierarchies and performed middle class practices of belonging.

## 11 Monika – strategies of integration with the British middle class

Today we went wedding shopping together. Monika is getting married in a few weeks and she still needs to buy some accessories for herself and her fiancé. She picked me up from a supermarket carpark near her workplace. We first drove to Cribbs Causeway, the largest shopping mall situated on the outskirts of Bristol, and then to the city centre where she arranged to meet up with a Polish friend of hers. Today was the fifth time I saw her and both of us were much more relaxed and comfortable around each other. We had a nice and friendly chat in the car about her wedding preparation. She joked about her fiancé not being able to choose the right colour of tie and handkerchief: 'Send him to buy a pink tie and he comes back with a purple one!' I enjoyed her company and felt that we were bonding (...). Suddenly she asked me out of the blue: 'Don't you want to do research on Muslims and how they integrate?' She laughed sarcastically. I did not expect this type of question and I sensed hostility in her tone of voice. I didn't know how to react and just replied without much thinking: 'Which ones do you mean? Do you mean Muslim immigrants?' And she said: 'You know, those from Syria... you don't know if they are refugees or terrorists'. We briefly discussed whether Poland and Britain will accept any. Then there were a few seconds of silence until she added: 'I feel sorry for these people, really, because they do have difficult lives. But it is a difficult situation, because you are just unable to know if they are terrorists, or if they just want to use the situation and settle in here. On the other hand, I'm an immigrant myself so it's hard for me to judge'

Field notes, July 2015

My fieldwork was carried out during the 'refugee crisis' period in 2015 when there was significant media attention on the increased number of boats carrying hundreds of refugees a day from Turkey to the Greek islands, especially Lesbos. Some British media discourses vilified them as unwanted criminals 'flooding' Europe rather than being real fugitives (Parker, 2015). In Poland, Polish political and media debates about 'the crisis' turned into a more radical standpoint (Buchowski, 2016, Pędziwiatr and Legut, 2016). The radicalized language and a tougher position of the Polish government against refugees contributed to blocking their entry as a part of the European Union's resettlement plan. These discourses correlated with the rise of Islamophobia expressed publicly through anti-refugee demonstrations and slogans of racial hatred at football matches (Rose, 2017). Monika, who watched Polish television, was exposed to both British and Polish types of rhetoric. Her questioning of their refugee status and perceptions of them as a threat seemed to resonate

with negative media discourses. That day I spent six hours watching her mingling in public spaces with people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, not paying attention to Muslim families walking past her numerous times, being polite and chatty with a British South Asian shop assistant while getting on with shopping in her micro Polish cosmos with me and her friend. Monika expressed 'urban civility towards diversity' (Lofland, 1989: 464) numerous times when I observed her in diverse spaces. Nonetheless, Monika's practices of indifference did not exclude racialized discourses towards Muslim people. In this chapter I will explore Monika's perceptions of difference and elaborate on her limited experiences with ethnic others and negotiations of the salient class identity within the integration process. Even though Monika did not encounter Muslim people directly, they were present in her discourses that drew boundaries of deservingness in Britain. Her example illustrates how differences are understood in less diverse settings and helps to look at diversity as a political concept that socially and spatially segregates certain marginalized people.

### The absence of Muslim people in the everyday life

At the time of the fieldwork, Monika had been living in Bristol for ten years. She was in a relationship with Marcin, discussed in the previous chapter. Two years before the fieldwork started, they bought a house in a white working class neighbourhood in Bristol. Her workplace was situated in an affluent middle class area, next to her neighbourhood. She had worked for three years in two residential houses as a support worker for elderly people with learning difficulties. She started as a cleaner and after a few months of employment, a support worker position became available. Encouraged by the team, she applied and got the job. She was recently promoted to a senior position and appeared to enjoy the job and to be proud of what she had achieved. Even though it was a semi-skilled position which did not meet her educational background, she had a bachelor's degree in pedagogics, it was an improvement in her status as for the first seven years of living in Bristol she had worked as a cleaner.

Monika's direct encounters with ethnic difference were limited to what Burke (2012) describes as the consumption of diversity in diverse spaces, i.e. when shopping. Monika's immediate physical environment consisted of her Polish family and white and predominantly British neighbours and colleagues. There was hardly any ethnic difference in the spaces she encountered on a daily basis. She lived in a mostly white working-class area and worked as a support worker in a residential home in an affluent middle-class neighbourhood. Throughout the six-months of my acquaintance with her I realised that the ethnic racial and cultural difference she directly experienced was very limited compared to other respondents living in more diverse parts of the city. She had fleeting interactions with racial, ethnic or religious difference at her daughter's school or in the city centre, while shopping on her favourite shopping street. Apart from these, her environment was predominantly

white. Bristol's neighbourhoods vary in terms of ethnic and class demographics, with some being super-diverse and socially and economically deprived, while others are predominantly white but diverse in terms of the class of their populations (Bristol City Council, 2017). Monika's experiences of diversity appeared to be partially determined by the spatial division of the city and absence of ethnic others in her everyday life within the immediate environment.

Monika's everyday practices occurred within a 'white habitus', i.e. racialized socialization process that restricts in social and geographical terms the opportunities of the white majority to have meaningful contact with people of colour, and maintains the structural discrimination of minorities (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006: 233). The spatial segregation and marginalisation of black and Muslim communities is one manifestation of structural economic and cultural discrimination, which as Wacquant (2014) argued, reflects the state's role in producing classed and ethnicized marginality. Thus, Muslim people were physically absent Others who Monika did not encounter directly but mainly discursively through media representations and conversations with her friends and colleagues. Her streetscapes were symbolically purified of the 'polluting Other' (Douglas, 2002) which reinforced whiteness as the norm (Garner, 2007) that was rarely challenged (Frankenberg, 1993). In a relatively homogenous environment, Monika seemed to fit in easily as her whiteness made her invisible in public spaces. Nevertheless, the physical absence of Muslims did not eliminate the importance of their presence in Monika's life, as the vignette from my field diary cited above demonstrates.

Monika expressed hostility towards Muslims a number of times during the fieldwork and based some of her judgements on her discussions with a Polish friend working in a school in a diverse neighbourhood, as she expressed in the initial interview:

'She told me about children, she works with disabled children, autistic ones, they are from these families, which unfortunately [pause] are mixed with close relatives, I spoke to her about it yesterday.'

She reported it with noticeable unease. She continued expressing further concerns:

'Actually, this is what I don't like in this country. Tolerance pushed to its limits, right? (...) They are from Somalia, aren't they? And they try to establish their own rules. Because if you come to this country, you should recognize the laws of this country, respect everything that is here, including the law and religion. If your faith is different and you do not like it, nobody is keeping you here, right? But do not change it, is not your country, right? I can't stand it, I came to this country and have respected every

single piece of this land since. Every single piece of a person who lives here, right?  
Because I am [pause] I was a guest, right? Now I'm a resident of this country, right?'

First interview, July 2015

She reinforced her point in the exit interview, when she discussed the 'refugee crisis':

'Marcin [her husband] is more interested [in politics] than I am. For him refugees are terrorists who want to colonise Europe and that's it. (...) There are plenty of examples that they take in women with children, right? But this is a small percentage. I think it's mostly lads and you just don't know if it's the war which made them flee or if they have another goal. Honestly, I have no clue. It's horrible what's going on right now, I have no clue [pause] I don't want to believe that this is a colonisation of Europe, but perhaps that's what's happening.'

Exit interview, December 2015

Her narrative demonstrated a fear of the Muslim Other. This may have been exacerbated by the fact that Bristol has one neighbourhood that is mostly populated by a Muslim minority. She rarely visited this neighbourhood but frequently heard of it from her friend who worked there. Within the boundaries of the same city, the presence of a threatening Other was still perceptible, even if not encountered directly. However, her concern about 'the colonisation' of Britain and their perceived claims to 'establish their own rules', revealed fear of the fragility of these social boundaries and Monika's need to maintain them. Her discourse marginalising Muslim minorities enabled Monika to claim a position of relative higher status. The statements such as 'don't change the country' or 'nobody is keeping you here' demonstrated a 'governing belonging' (Hage, 1998), i.e. the claim that one holds a legitimate view of who can belong to a nation. Monika's claims demonstrated a type of attitude that categorised people within hierarchies of belonging in British society. Muslim minorities and refugees were perceived as less deserving than her due to their perceived difference as deviant and dangerous (Anthias, 2016: 180). Thus, she claimed equal status with the dominant group through shared whiteness. In this process she reinforced hierarchies of difference that are produced by national ideological discourses on integration (Anthias, 2013b).

However, as the field notes quoted at the beginning show, her position was often contradictory. Monika was aware of the shortcomings of her position in Britain: 'On the other hand, I'm an immigrant myself so it's hard for me to judge' (Field notes, July 2015). This claim was further elaborated by her guest/host discourse cited earlier and reinforced during the final interview:



‘I will never be British (...) ehmm, I don’t know, how much time needs to pass, how much longer I need to live here... but at the moment I don’t feel British. I will always have a different accent, people always ask me where I’m from (...). I used to feel embarrassed, it upset me in some way that I was not English, but now – no, not at all, why should I feel different? I’m from Poland, simple...I won’t change it, I will never have a British accent. I have a different *background* [in English]; I was brought up in a different way, in a completely different country, I have a different history, right?’

Exit interview, December 2015

Her ongoing efforts to fit in fully with white British people and be perceived as one of them were sometimes met with exclusion. Monika realised that no matter how much she tried to become one of *us*, her otherness would never be diminished. She embodied difference in her accent, and was consequently recognisable as Other (Rzepnikowska, 2016b: 10). Her whiteness secured only conditional belonging. The above quote illustrates her strategies to cope with her permanent otherness. Monika was convinced she would never be able to overcome the cultural boundaries. The host/guest discourse she used earlier reinforced those boundaries. Monika attempted to overcome her anxieties about being an inferior citizen through everyday practices that asserted her status as a ‘deserving citizen’. She resisted it by turning her Polish identity into a positive difference. British people would never understand the way she was brought up, how growing up in a socialist country had affected her childhood, and they would never understand her culture and history. This shows Monika’s agency in discursively reconstructing the boundaries and challenging the deserving/undeserving citizen dichotomy (Verkuyten, 2005).

Monika’s narrative seemed to reinforce the integration discourses prevalent in British society that construct ‘us’ and ‘them’ based on shared cultural values that certain minorities such as Muslims are excluded from (Anthias, 2013b). As Anthias (2013b: 328-329) further argued, the notion of integration as a two-way process is rhetorical rather than real and integration discourses are claimed by her to be more assimilationist, since they undermine ethnic and religious minorities’ differences. These assimilationist meanings were reinforced by Monika in relation to Muslim minorities. She expressed the subjective understandings of prevalent values in British society, such as obeying the law, appreciating the hosts’ tolerance towards its guests, respecting the dominant religion. By juxtaposing her own normative position as similar to the British majority, with Muslim people as the law-breakers, she situated herself in the national hierarchies of belonging as more integrated and deserving in society. Simultaneously, Monika resisted assimilative integration by emphasizing her Polish identity. Although she felt inferior in relation to the British majority, she

believed that she deserved to be part of it more than Muslim minorities. Monika presented herself as more capable of adapting to British society's rules. She demonstrated her commitment to and investment in being a good citizen. She discursively positioned herself as honourable, i.e. respectful and obeying laws and norms, which stressed her moral superiority over Muslim migrants. She preserved her conditional citizenship, resulting from her tolerated citizen status (Anderson, 2013), by trying to prove that she was a better 'migrant' than other minorities.

The understanding of British society as (too) tolerant, with white British people as the legitimate citizens and Muslim minorities of colour as undeserving, was intertwined with Monika's experiences embedded in her lower status relative to the white British majority. As I will discuss next, these meanings were reflected in her everyday practices with others and intersected with her experiences and understandings of class.

## Tolerance

When I visited Monika for the second time [at her workplace], we spent the first hour in the care home that she worked at, where I observed her interacting with residents and other support workers. Towards the end of that hour, we took one of the residents for a walk to the nearby pharmacy. On the way back, she asked me if I had recruited enough people for my study and I said that I was still looking for some and wondered if she wanted to recommend anyone who would be willing to take part. She mentioned a cleaner in the care home, a Polish lady in her 50s. She described her with following words:

'This lady came here with her family, but she isn't happy. She is racist, it's difficult for her to adjust. I sometimes can't listen to her! Perhaps when people are forced to be here, unlike me who wants to be here, perhaps it's harder for them'.

Field notes, July 2015

She mentioned the cleaner on a few other occasions. Another time we went to a nearby park with her daughter and her school friend, Monika told me that she had had tensions with the cleaner over the pejorative language she used about the residents and the staff members. She claimed that the woman constantly used racist slurs to complain about Britain and it upset Monika. She condemned the racist attitude of that woman. She believed that anyone coming to Britain should accept its rules, and one of these was tolerance towards diversity. Similarly, she reprimanded Marcin, her husband, on a few occasions for using racist slurs. As she admitted in the final interview:

‘He is a horrible racist (...) Sometimes when he says something, especially in front of our daughter, I either tell him off or give him the look’ (Exit interview, December 2015).

Monika’s experiences and opinions about difference expressed an approach of tolerance towards people of colour that she had acquired in British society. The tolerance discourse reflected an assumed superiority of the majority population which had the power to accept difference (Modood, 2007). As Hage (1998: 87) has further argued, tolerant nations understand racism in terms of accidental, explicit forms of violence, rather than critically reflecting on tolerance as a type of symbolic violence reproducing power relations in societies. Monika’s understanding of Britain as a tolerant country reinforced this notion. She found it unacceptable to be racist towards black people and she openly condemned explicit racism from the Polish cleaner and her husband. However, she justified her views on Muslim minorities with a discourse of protection and concerns about the nation, expressing what Hage (2003) describes as ‘paranoid nationalism’, i.e. nationalism based on worries about protecting the nation against strangers in the era of neoliberal politics threatening security of citizens. At the same time, Monika was capable of being civil towards difference and demonstrate practices of what Noble (2009: 51) calls ‘unpanicked multiculturalism’. These two are not mutually exclusive and I observed both practices, sometimes occurring during the course of the same day. Thus, Monika had learnt a British type of tolerance towards ethnic minorities of colour, who she was always civil towards and whom she accepted as part of a diverse society. However, this tolerance was conditional upon *them* ‘respecting the rules of British society’. She expected from them the same form of respect she had been able to demonstrate, i.e. invisible integration. Nevertheless, religion and ethnicity were the visible markers which these minorities were not able to overcome. Thus, their integration could never be achieved according to Monika’s criteria. The tolerance and guest/host discourses served to maintain her status as a good migrant.

As already mentioned, Monika’s encounters with ethnic and racial others were sporadic, usually occurring within commercial contexts. Her friends, family and work colleagues, i.e. the people she had developed more meaningful relations with, were either Polish or white British. Yet, she did not express any anxiety towards the ethnic and religious Others that she sometimes had to share space with. She often acted indifferent towards them. Her encounters with ethnic others were limited to shopping relations, defined by consuming ‘authentic’ products from ‘exotic’ others. Sometimes, due to frequency, they transformed into more interpersonal interactions. One of her favourite shops was a Vietnamese supermarket run by a Vietnamese family, where she discovered various spices and types of food she had never tried. When we went there together she said to me:

‘Now his English [the Vietnamese shop owner] is better, it used to be much worse! I like that they don’t have an inferiority complex. Not like us Poles. If they can’t speak they will try with arms, legs and eventually they will communicate! [laugh] And we? We are scared, we have an inferiority complex.’

Field notes, November 2015

Even though she discursively drew boundaries between us-Poles and them-Vietnamese, she racialized the man in positive terms (Nayak, 2005) by admiring his confidence contrasted with the perceived lack of self-esteem of Poles. She was not indifferent to the man’s cultural Otherness. She appreciated it and got involved in small chit-chat with him which she seemed to genuinely enjoy. Monika’s lived diversities appeared to be limited to these friendly, mostly superficial encounters. Cultural otherness was consumed and tasted, which sometimes developed into a more interpersonal contact, as in the case of Vietnamese shop owner, but did not translate into meaningful friendships or cross-cultural interactions based on shared interests or experiences. She was capable of expressing an ethic of indifference when she happened to be in multicultural public spaces. This did not appear to be a result of living in a multicultural neighbourhood but of her adherence to a perceived norm in British society of ‘tolerating’ difference, which she had learnt while living in Bristol. The civil inattention did not mean that she had surpassed ethnic difference and become indifferent to it. To the contrary, she maintained boundaries in her everyday practices. The spatial dimension played an important role in how she perceived and interacted with cultural others since living and working in predominantly white British neighbourhoods limited her opportunities to engage with others beyond encounters in commercial spaces. Instead, class became the most salient identity she negotiated through everyday practices.

### Acting middle class

Monika’s strategies to improve her status were not related to breaking ties with co-ethnics, as Moreh (2014) suggested in his study on Romanians in Spain. He argued that while upward mobility is not immediately possible, Romanians perform a higher prestige status while being employed in the low skilled sector. In his case study, Romanian migrants to Spain achieve this through consciously breaking social ties with co-ethnics and strengthening their ties with local residents, as identification with their group is perceived as an obstacle to improving their status. Although these practices may be a common experience amongst new immigrants who want to differentiate themselves from a homogenised, sometimes stigmatized, group, it is not always the case for more settled migrants. The lack of dependence on co-ethnic networks correlates with the acquisition of cultural capital (White and Ryan, 2008). Monika spoke English fluently even though she did not

know it when she first arrived. She worked with mostly British people rather than other co-ethnics, as often observed amongst migrants, especially at the beginning of the migration process (Ryan et al., 2008). She had achieved economic stability and financial security. Other Poles did not threaten her well-established status anymore and she did not attempt to distance herself from them. Indeed, throughout the fieldwork she never claimed that other Poles cannot be trusted, a preconception apparent in Polish people's discourses as other studies have shown (Garapich, 2012, Ryan, 2010: 679-680), and which I also observed amongst some of my other respondents (e.g. Simon or Tomek).

Even though Monika could be considered as integrated into British society by fulfilling a number of criteria of success, particularly through her housing arrangements, employment and English language skills (White, 2010: 138), she demonstrated practices through which she wanted to integrate with a specific segment of the British population. She performed differentiating strategies against the white British working class in order to improve her social status. Rather than other Poles, the white British working class was the group she identified herself against. Both Monika and her husband, Marcin, tried to detach themselves from their neighbourhood's stigmatized white working class British population. Monika stressed in the initial interview that she was troubled by the perceived poor culture of the residents:

'You know, our neighbourhood is so-so. I don't like misbehaving children. When we first moved in, a boy ran out in the middle on the street, just in front of our car, took his pants off and showed us his bottom! He was perhaps my daughter's age [nine]. Just after we had bought the house! [laugh]. I was sitting in the car speechless and just thought: "Where am I?!"' [still laughing]

First interview, July 2015

This quote illustrates her attempts of 'disidentification [with working class] that presupposes a recognition of class identity/location (to thereby refuse it), particularly as an attribution by others' (Anthias, 2013a: 123). She perceived the British working class as 'lower' compared to her previous status in Poland. She did not want to be associated with the local working class residents, whose culture she associated with poor etiquette. One afternoon we were sitting in a local park while her daughter and her best friend were playing in the playground. We talked about her neighbourhood again. She reinforced the same claim:

'It's fine, you know, it's OK. We don't spend too much time there and we only know our immediate neighbours next door: one elderly Irish alcoholic man, who has

charmed me though, and a lesbian couple in their 50s. The area is okay but not great. There are many elderly people but also a lot of youth who are not so...you know, they sit outside and are very loud (...) Oh! And there is this woman who always walks past our house on the way to the school and she always yells at her son [she stopped laughing and looked upset]. Magda, if you could hear her, how loudly she shouts at him! (...) My daughter was a bit scared of her at the beginning but now when we see her, we just joke. For example, we say: "What happened today? She was shouting quite quietly." [she started laughing again]

Field notes, October 2015

Monika evaluated working class negatively in cultural terms, as depraved from morals (Skeggs, 2004: 117). She did not seem to have developed a sense of belonging to her neighbourhood. It did not constitute her community. On the contrary, she did not want to be associated with its population. It seemed that she attempted to improve her position in society not by distancing herself from the Polish community but by detachment from the white working class she was bound to geographically. She felt more connected to the white middle class areas near where she lives, which were more affluent and aesthetically more pleasant. She spent most of her free time there, going running or shopping on the main shopping street on the way back from school. She took her daughter out for meals in the area's pub but never visited local pubs in her neighbourhood. Once, when were driving through the centre of the affluent neighbourhood, she made a comment:

'It is a really nice area, so sweet, and you can find everything you want here (...) I come here with my daughter for walks, ice cream... oh here! there is a really nice pub [she pointed at it] with a nice garden overlooking the whole of Bristol. Jesus, how beautiful! On a little hill. Fantastic! (...) And you can get everything done in this place! (...) Everyone knows everyone, this is why I love such businesses as this one. They do it out of passion, right? You don't work for someone because you have to but because you love it!'

Field notes, July 2015

Her shopping habits demonstrated further her progressive middle-class practices:

'This [the name of the shopping street] is my street. I can find here everything I need. I love those local shops, you know? They just thrive, they are not big chain supermarkets, they do not earn money, loads of money for some rich guys, do you know what I mean? Those are family businesses, I like such things. Even if I have to pay

a bit more, I don't mind because at least I know I help a family and not an owner of a big chain such as Co-op or Tesco.'

First Interview, July 2015

Nayak, in his study on white working-class masculinities in Newcastle, observed how class becomes a differentiating identity in an ethnically homogenous geographic area: '(i)n the absence of a significant ethnic minority population the Real Geordies did not simply affirm their whiteness in relation to blackness as other writers have shown (Back, 1996; Cohen, 1993; Hewitt, 1986) but also through and against other forms of white subjectivity' (Nayak, 2003: 14). Similarly, in the predominantly white British environment, Monika negotiated class rather than ethnic difference. She tried to improve her status by adopting the practices of a middle-class lifestyle. Thus, she took her daughter for walks in the affluent neighbourhoods, she engaged in healthy eating, she was conscious of the environment and paid extra for food or clothing if this meant supporting local independent businesses. Her perceptions of these places idealised the relationships between the residents and romanticised them as spaces of belonging with an imagined social bond between residents, which she seemed to long for. She expressed nostalgic feelings for a community she had never experienced. She did not feel attached to her local area and did not invest time or effort in getting involved in local activities which would bring her closer to the other residents. However, she was engaged in everyday practices which would make her feel that she belonged to the affluent neighbourhoods. She sought to improve her status in socio-psychological terms by engaging in practices associated with the middle class.

## Conclusion

Bristol, even though it can be described as super-diverse, is spatially and socially segregated. This division affects peoples' everyday experiences of diversities. The physical absence of people of colour and Muslim minorities in Monika's predominantly white British neighbourhoods marks their politically significant presence as excluded and racialized subjects. Thus, she constructed her identity as a good migrant in contrast to those who are less capable of fitting in with the British majority. This social closure was justified by practices with British colleagues which Monika explains below:

'Once we had a conversation at work with my manager [white British lady] and I asked her: "What would you do if a Muslim woman applied for this job? I mean, another religion which would not allow her, don't know, to have contact with men, touch pork etc." And she, you know, smiled at me and said: "You know what I would do, but my professionalism does not allow me to say it". You know, there are many things we can

do, if they can't touch pork liver, then we could do it instead...but I don't think you can be a Muslim woman and do this job, at least that's what I think. They wouldn't be able to.'

Exit interview, December 2015

Monika verified her perceptions by the supposed reaffirmation she had received from British, i.e. white English, colleagues. Although these discourses reflect a position of power, Monika seems to be aware of her ambivalent position of 'being an immigrant herself'.

Encounters with racial and religious difference were limited and usually occurred within commercial spaces where she had consumer-like interactions with minorities or migrants. She did not try to develop meaningful relations with minorities, partly because her opportunities to do so were limited by white habitus. The ethnic identities of minorities were therefore irrelevant in her everyday life. However, in contrast with her limited direct encounters with other ethnic minorities, class became a category she negotiated on a more regular basis. To become British meant to perform middle-class Britishness, i.e. being tolerant towards minorities, engaging in an ethic of indifference towards difference in commercial contexts, or reprimanding other Poles who did not follow these principles. Monika's experiences and reflections illustrate how British hierarchies of belonging can be learnt and reproduced by newcomers. Monika was spatially detached from ethnic and religious minorities. Her white habitus reflected structurally embedded racial and economic inequalities. She learned that Britishness equalled whiteness, whilst people of colour and Muslims deviated from this. Her status of a 'tolerated citizen' (Anderson, 2013) was expressed in everyday practices against an abstract Muslim category, who she rarely encountered as well as against the white working class who she did. In the next chapter I elaborate on Daniel, who contrary to Monika and Marcin, expressed the belonging by embracing diversity in a more meaningful way and on a more personal level.



## 12 Daniel – in-between Polish and British hierarchies of belonging

Patryk looked around to make sure no strangers were close enough to hear him. Then he leaned forward towards the other side of the table on which a few of us were sitting and whispered in English, 'I used to work with this black guy. He was an asshole, we didn't get on. Once it got really tense between us and he called me a fucking Polish twat. So I punched him. But then I lost my job'. Patryk, a Polish man, is one of the best friends of my study participant, Daniel. We were sitting in a pub with other friends of Daniel, celebrating his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. Daniel invited his cousin along with his Brazilian girlfriend, and three male friends: two Polish and one white British. The Brazilian woman did not engage in conversation, she sat quietly next to her boyfriend throughout the evening and I soon noticed that other men did not include her in the conversation. Everyone at the table, including Daniel, listened to Patryk without interruption. They nodded in silence without making any comments and soon moved onto another topic of a conversation. This discussion took place alongside civil inattention towards difference in the diverse environment of a pub. We were served by a mixed-heritage waiter, and there were customers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds sitting at nearby tables. My respondent and his friends did not pay any attention to them. This 'urban civility' was accompanied by sexist remarks about two women at a table next to ours. All the men in the group seemed to be interested in their appearances and contemplated approaching the women.

About half an hour later, three black men joined us. One of them, Marvin, a very good friend of Daniel's, used to work with him as a bouncer in a night club. He brought a friend and a cousin with him to the party. They introduced themselves to me and the others, including Patryk, who they were meeting for the first time. Having just listened to Patryk's anecdote, I was curious to observe how everyone, especially Patryk, would interact with the newcomers. But, he was nothing other than friendly and attentive. They greeted each another with a warm handshake. They all sat down in different seats around the table mingling with others. If someone started speaking Polish, Patryk or Daniel would reply in English so that the men would not feel excluded or unwelcome. The conscious effort Patryk and the others made to speak English was acknowledged by their black friends when they bought everyone a round of shots of vodka. They all seemed to bond quickly over the drinks, engaged in a lot of banter together and seemed to enjoy each other's company.

Daniel was very excited to see his friend, Marvin, and eagerly told me about their friendship. He said that they always have a lot of fun together and explained that their sense of humour is rather 'peculiar'. To illustrate what he meant, he mentioned that once they had gone together to Barcelona for a holiday. While they took pictures in the evening, Daniel said to Marvin, 'Marvin, you say you are next to me on this picture so why can I not see you?' Everyone started laughing, including Marvin. Then Daniel added: 'since then Marvin has been using a torch every time we take selfies together' and they both continued laughing. Marvin did not seem to be upset about the mockery of his skin colour. Daniel added that often strangers seemed to be uncomfortable with their jokes and did not know how to react to them. Both of them would make similar remarks and, as a joke, call themselves racist in public spaces. They were aware that they were politically incorrect and caused discomfort in others but they found it amusing. I experienced an uncomfortable feeling a few minutes later, when a waiter brought a birthday cake, which had been purchased from a cake shop where it had been made by a Polish woman who had written Daniel's name on it. Marvin, already quite drunk, shouted whilst laughing, 'the girl is racist!' and followed with the comment that she had not written his name on his cake when they had celebrated his birthday. At that point people were becoming rowdy and no one reacted to Marvin's joke. He repeated it twice, each time louder. I was sitting next to him and looked around consciously to check if other customers in the pub could hear him and sighed with relief when I realized no one else seemed to be paying attention to him. Finally, Daniel's cousin replied that the woman from the cake shop wouldn't know how to spell his name. They all laughed and eventually the subject was changed.

Field notes, October 2015

My methodological approach allowed me to observe how multicultural sensibilities expressed through conviviality or civil inattention can co-exist with negative practices or discourses. Even though everyone had a nice time at the birthday party described above, these friendly cross-cultural and inter-ethnic practices were accompanied by racialized jokes and discourses that drew racial boundaries. Daniel seemed comfortable making remarks about Marvin's skin colour, whereas Marvin ridiculed a Polish cake maker, calling her racist in a supposedly joking manner. Using racialized humour is neither new nor uncommon in both public and political discourses (Lockyer and Pickering, 2005) and everyday practices (Essed, 1991, Velayutham, 2009, Back, 1996). It can be used by the majority population as a tool of implicit reproduction of ideology in order to belittle subordinated groups (Billig, 2005). On a micro level, a post-racial, i.e. colour-blind ideology

(Goldberg, 2015), is often subtly expressed in the form of racist jokes, which implicitly articulate dominance over the marginalized Other. However, the power relation between Daniel and Marvin is not a straightforward hierarchical division. Both men embody stigmatized traits: Daniel's 'foreign' accent and Marvin's blackness. Perhaps, therefore, their jokes are not taken with offence since they do not manifest the more obvious forms of domination. As Amanda Wise (2016: 484) argued, ethno-racial difference mocked in jocular exchanges can be 'a sign of deepening bonds, acceptance and friendship'. Both Daniel and Marvin used explicit humour to emphasize the bond as well as re-assert their working-class masculinities. Kehily and Nayak (1997) suggested that macho behaviour is often expressed through jokes. The banter which may have offended other people, but which Daniel claimed to care little about, re-established their masculine prowess.

This small episode from Daniel's life shows the complex ways he negotiated racial, ethnic and gender identities. In the story told by Patryk, he stressed his co-worker's skin colour and his Polishness as important identities in the described argument, drawing our attention to the racial and ethnic boundaries between them. The conversation included white Polish and British people, while everyone performed civil inattention to the ethnically and racially diverse crowd in the pub. Soon afterwards, three black friends of Daniel joined our table and the prevalent mode of interactions were friendly encounters between them that created a social bond between men. These, though, did not exclude humour that was used to maintain racial boundaries. The contrasting practices of both racialization and meaningful connection across difference happened during the same evening and in one social space. This demonstrated that individuals are capable of engaging, and *do* engage, in various modes of interactions, contingent upon the significant others they are with, and they abide by prevalent codes of civil practice. The vignette shows that while civil inattention may be a prevalent form of encounter in a diverse setting, less favourable practices can occur without the disruption of this urban civility. As I will elaborate throughout this chapter, Daniel's everyday lived diversities either expressed solidarity or marked boundaries. These contradictory practices were influenced by unequal social relations with the white British majority that Daniel perceived as discriminatory towards him. Hence, I situate his practices with others within British hierarchies of belonging that construct Poles' status as inferior.

### Conviviality and tensions with other Poles

At the time of the fieldwork, Daniel had been living in Britain for nine years. He was 21 when he first arrived in Nottingham. He came from a small town in southwest Poland, where he finished a vocational school having trained as a car mechanic. He grew up in what he described as a skinhead subculture with his friends being eight to nine years older than him and having a strong influence on his worldviews. He claimed that they advocated white supremacy and expressed biological

racism towards black people, although only in abstract terms, since there were hardly any black people in his hometown. Nevertheless, even then he seemed to question the ideas behind the ideology:

‘To be perfectly honest, in Poland I had really bad views. When I was growing up, all my friends were skinheads, so I was also prejudiced (...). When I arrived here, I had a weird attitude, I had never met anyone from India before. To be fair I was, ehmmm, I don’t know, I think already in Poland I was, ehmmm, I don’t know how to say it, I always liked rap music. My friends were telling me that I couldn’t listen to it because I was a skinhead. And I was like no! I do like rap, I have nothing against anyone. And in time I have distanced myself from it [skinhead subculture].’

First interview, July 2015

The encounters with ethnic and racial others in Britain, through which Daniel had developed cosmopolitan and convivial repertoires of action, clashed with his circle of friends back home and, Daniel claimed, had caused tensions. Daniel dated a Mexican woman for a few years and took her to Poland for a family visit. He recalled how he felt like an outsider:

‘When I went to Poland with Maria, my ex-girlfriend, it was similar. My friends from when I was young, skinheads, did not want to talk to me because I’m going out with a girl who is not of a pure [Polish] blood. I mean no one said it to my face, this is *polska odwaga* [the Polish bravery, sarcastic undertone]. But simply people started deleting me from Facebook, or in general, they would walk past me on the street and not say hello, they would just turn around and pretend they didn’t know me.’

Exit interview, February 2016

Daniel felt he was ostracized in Poland by his old friends because of his relationship with a Mexican woman. Daniel suggested his white Polish identity was challenged and his relationship was perceived as a betrayal of his [Polish] blood ties. The longer he had been in Britain, the more ambivalent his Polish identity became and the more difficult the decision to return was. As he stated in the exit interview:

‘Even when I go there on holiday, for just a couple of weeks, after only the first week I tell my mum “Mum, I want to go back home.” My mum replies “But you are home”. No, you see, I don’t feel at home there anymore.’

First interview, July 2015

Furthermore, Daniel's experiences with Polish people in Britain were also often unpleasant. When he first arrived, he shared a house with other Polish immigrants who, according to Daniel, were lazy, lived on benefits and cared only about drinking. They represented a stigmatised type of immigrant which he did not want to be associated with. On the contrary, it was important for him to be recognized as a hardworking individual who was willing to integrate. In this way, he asserted a claim to be a 'good citizen' (Anderson, 2013, Patrick, 2012) by emphasizing his investment in a strong work ethic. His first workplace was in Manchester in a supermarket cold-room sorting vegetables. The shifts were twelve hours long and he commuted from Nottingham every day, two hours each way. Back then he was sleeping three to four hours a day but was happy and proud of himself for finding a job without English language skills. Later, when he moved to Leicester and worked on a construction site, two friends of his cousin – one from Somalia and one from India – looked after him, taking him out and teaching him English. Nonetheless, he still maintained mainly Polish networks and shared a house with other Poles. Once he and his cousin got into a conflict with their Polish female housemate and ended up on the street. They had nowhere to go. An Iraqi man, who they vaguely knew from a kebab shop, offered to let them stay in his studio flat with him as long as they needed. Thus, migrants from other countries surprised him with their generosity, which he contrasted with a lack of help and empathy from his co-ethnics:

'I was so surprised that in England not a Pole but a guy from Iraq, who didn't know me at all, helped me! He took us to his home in November and we stayed there until March.'

First interview, July 2015

The 'urban sociabilities' (Glick Schiller and Ayse, 2015) developed between Daniel and migrants of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds were based on mutual support and kindness and as a response to the hostile practices experienced from co-ethnics. Daniel expressed a lack of trust towards Poles after the conflicts he had experienced with them. As the above quote illustrates, he assumed there would be solidarity between co-ethnics and was disappointed by the lack of it when tensions emerged. The intra-ethnic hostility, not uncommon amongst Poles (Garapich, 2012, Ryan, 2010), led Daniel to more meaningful encounters with ethnic others that shaped his lived experience of diversity.

Daniel's relationship with Polish people was contradictory. He emphasised to me a number of times that he could not rely on Polish people in Britain and yet his closest friends were Polish, he used Polish services and relied on Polish networks. From the beginning of his migration journey he had experienced both tensions and close friendships with Poles. This paradox of contradictory

experiences with co-ethnics is also observed by Michal Garapich (2012), who argued that research on Poles often overestimates their over-arching ethnic identity and assumes solidarity based on cultural ties, while ignoring intra-ethnic class differences. However, Daniel's negative discourses about other Polish citizens did not rest on perceived class difference between him and them but his desire to differentiate himself from those that might be considered 'failed citizens' (Anderson, 2013).

Daniel, similar to Paulina (from the previous chapter), claimed that many of the Poles he had met in Britain were narrow-minded and backward in their thinking. He avoided people who confined themselves to Polish circles, criticized everything that was non-Polish and showed no signs of a willingness to integrate. It was not perceived class difference that established boundaries between him and the stigmatized Poles. Instead, he drew a distinction based on his claimed convivial approach to others and their apparent inability to accept diversity. The inter-ethnic solidarity skills Daniel developed in Britain were perceived by him as a sign of his integration and higher social status vis-à-vis other Poles. Even though he was excluded by Poles back in Poland due to his willingness to mix with ethnic and racial others, he saw his cosmopolitan practices as an asset in the British context. He had white British friends as well as racial and ethnic minority friends. He did not need to rely on Polish networks for accommodation or employment anymore. His acquired cultural capital were skills that distanced him from other Poles. He may not have had a higher socio-economic status than them but in terms of cultural norms, he believed he was more integrated into multicultural British society.

Indeed, Daniel's everyday experiences of lived diversities manifested conviviality, where the difference he experienced became an ordinary feature of his environment. Recognition of others and a sense of world-citizenship had developed in his nine years of living in Britain and through his various encounters with racial, ethnic and religious difference. His friendships with Iraqi, Somali and Indian men in his first months of his migration journey played an important role in the process of adjusting to a new society and learning to live with difference. His current friends and acquaintances come from different cultural, class and religious backgrounds: his bouncer manager is dual-heritage, his bouncer co-workers are either black British, Polish or British-Somali. He was in a relationship with a Mexican woman, who was a student at the University of Bristol at that time, and through her he met other international students from Central and South America and Asia. He had travelled in Europe with a white British friend and regularly goes mountain biking with another white British friend. He had a passion for handball and had been training with a team which comprised a mix of Hungarian, Spanish, French and British members. In the meantime, he maintained his Polish culture and proudly shared it with his friends. When he organized a party, he

decorated his flat with a Polish flag and prepared typical Polish snacks, drinks and music. He combined cultural experiences and celebrated mingling them rather than seeing them as separate and conflicting. He explained his approach to this by reference to a discourse about the universality of human nature (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002: 4):

‘I’ve been living here for ten years and I’m telling you I have no boundaries. I know that people from every region, country are good and bad. I know some Polish people who I would give good references for, and I’ve met others who I would not hang out at all because they [short pause] *sq do dupy* [suck] that’s all.’

Exit interview, February 2016

He has become accustomed to difference through ‘cosmopolitan sociabilities’ (Glick Schiller et al., 2011) and over time has developed a recognition of and engagement with racial and ethnic differences of his friends. His practices show his willingness to live meaningfully with diversity, not through superficial interactions, but through forming more interpersonal and intimate relationships with cultural others. Hence, he did not just consume difference from invisible ethnic others in commercial contexts, as in the case of other respondents (e.g. Monika, Adam). He developed strong bonds across difference. Nonetheless, these convivial strategies that made race and ethnicity an ordinary feature in his everyday life did not exclude racialized discourses, as the vignette referenced earlier demonstrated. To the contrary, they were intertwined with racial and ethnic boundary negotiations and were formed within racial hierarchies that also marginalise Daniel’s white identity. His convivial outlook caused social ostracism back in Poland, while in Britain it helped Daniel improve his status in socio-psychological terms. Even though Daniel demonstrated an ability to overcome racial and ethnic difference through constructing a hybrid identity (Hall, 2009), he was often stigmatized on the grounds of being a Polish citizen. Although he tried to embrace diversity in his everyday life, his own racialized category as an Other in the British context put his belonging to British society in question.

### Learning British hierarchies of belonging

‘At my workplace for example, we have this *policy* [in English], how to say it? *restricted?* [in English] For example, when we have training they talk a lot about *respect and dignity* [English], so you can’t criticize someone only because they are from a different country because then you will get sacked. So when you talk with people from work and see that they don’t like you being here, they won’t say it directly, in a rude way but will say only: “And don’t you have plans to go back home?” I say “No”.

And they will say: “And what keeps you here?” You know what I mean? Or: “But do you really want to live here? If I were a Pole, I would go back to Poland.”

First interview, July 2015

Daniel’s main job was at a railway station as a customer assistant. This quote demonstrates the awareness of anti-discriminatory policies that Daniel had learnt about in his workplace. At a training session he was explicitly told what an appropriate code of behaviour towards foreign workers was. However, he picked up on implicit forms of exclusion from his co-workers which, he claimed, subtly suggested that he was not welcome in Britain. These perceived discriminatory discourses (Verkuyten, 1997) were coupled with institutional discrimination. Daniel claimed he had faced difficulties in progressing in his career. He was convinced that his lack of promotion had resulted from discriminatory practices at his workplace towards minorities and migrants. He had applied for higher positions numerous times and, despite his work experience, had not been offered an interview, which he interpreted as racist practice towards him. A Ghanaian man in his 60s was the only other worker who did not belong to the ethnic majority and Daniel had developed a friendship with him, based on a shared experience of injustice. As Daniel stated, both men agreed that higher positions were dominated by white British people and their chances of being promoted were low. In the setting of his workplace he developed solidarity with the only man of colour, and struggled to form positive relations with his white British co-workers. In his other workplace, as a bouncer in a nightclub, he, similarly, bonded with a man of dual-heritage:

‘The guy I work for is *mixed race* [in English], his dad is white, and his mum is black. He, similarly, had a problem because he is *mixed race* [in English]; at school they didn’t like him, there was always something, but all of my [Polish] friends tolerate him.’

Exit interview, February 2016

It seemed that his frustration with a lack of opportunities shaped his relations with his colleagues and his manager. He found his workplace a hostile environment and clashed with white British people while bonding with ethnic minorities over perceived injustice. The conflicts Daniel told me about were not noticeable when I visited him a couple of times at work. One day when I visited Daniel at the station, I found him by the exit gate, checking commuters’ tickets while they were leaving the station. He claimed his job was boring and complained that he would like a change but had not been given an opportunity to progress in the company. There was another colleague, a white British female, with him by the exit gates, and two more male British men by the entrance gates, which were a bit further away and we could not see them, but I could hear them chatting.



He introduced me to his female colleague and a policeman who patrolled the station and who conversed with the workers. Everyone else I met was male white British, apart from this one woman. Daniel said that he did not get along with them and kept their relations on a professional level. A few minutes later another colleague, a white British man in his 50s, walked past us, said hello and a few random words in Polish. Daniel greeted him warmly and both of them exchanged a few jokes and the man left. They were very friendly. Daniel said that he liked him and that they were planning to go to India for a holiday together. He also added: 'He earns 30k [in English] a year and he has got a council flat. I don't know how this has happened, it annoys me a bit, they complain about us.' He then stopped talking as his line manager walked past us. When Daniel saw him, the look on his face betrayed his annoyance. Daniel said to me: 'I would introduce you to him, but he is an asshole and he's gone now anyway. He is only two years older than me, he came from the army and he only ordered us around.' Towards the end of the fieldwork Daniel was transferred to another town nearby, partially because the tensions with his manager had increased and he did not want to stay in the same place.

Everyone acted towards him in a civil manner and yet his narratives revealed the difficult relations he had with his colleagues in a setting dominated by white British people. If he had not expressed his frustrations, I would have not realised that he did not get along with others. The civility demanded by work policies hid these tensions. Daniel seemed to be the one who broke the civil code of conduct by explicitly confronting his manager. As he recalled, once, two days before his final shift, he pulled the manager to one side and told him in a very angry and threatening way: *'Stay the fuck away from me, there's only a few days left, I don't want you to talk to me, I'm fucking fed up with you, just stay away and we will both be happy'* [in English]. He acted in a way towards his manager in which he was lucky to have avoided disciplinary action.

Daniel perceived practices of exclusion from British people and tried to resist them. Economically and legally he was integrated into British society, as an EU citizen working and paying taxes, and legally equal in the labour market to other British people. Yet, he believed that he was discriminated against and had experienced implicit racism. He tried to act against his inferior status by engaging in strategies of resistance, i.e. discursively stigmatizing his colleague for using the welfare system, transferring to another town and refusing to take orders, all of which gave him a sense of regained power. His ascribed Polish identity often haunted him in his interactions with white British people. He experienced perceived racialization outside the workplace as well. He claimed that one day strangers on the street shouted, 'Fuck off home' at him when he spoke in Polish to his cousin. More implicitly, he claims to have been rejected by British girls he would meet in clubs, who seemingly would lose interest in him as soon as he said he was Polish. Daniel had dark hair and dark eyes and

was often mistaken for an Italian or Spanish citizen: 'When they think I'm Spanish or Italian, I get a lot of attention. But as soon as I say I'm from Poland, they just ignore me' (Field notes, January 2016). His Polishness was perceived by him as a negative difference in certain social contexts, with unequal power relations making him vulnerable, affecting his career opportunities and questioning his masculinity. Popular discourses stigmatizing Poles (Spigelman, 2013, Fitzgerald and Smoczynski, 2015) were manifested in his everyday life.

His resistance of marginalization was further reinforced in Daniel's characterisations of refugees and the so-called refugee crisis, through which he claimed a position of power and belonging:

'It would be best if they were sent back so they fight for their country rather than fleeing it. Poles would not give up their own country so easily! (...) It's fine if women and children come here, I have nothing against it but not all those young guys, I'm against Islamization of Europe (...) English people think the same, my Somali friend as well, and all my Polish friends, they can't stop talking about it.'

Field notes, January 2016

On the one hand, Daniel dealt with negative stigmatization by expressing solidarity with other minorities, on the other hand – he compensates for it by aligning himself with the majority through the discursive marginalization of certain newcomers as less desirable and less worthy citizens than him. He supported his claims by saying that English people agreed with him, which strengthened his position as one of 'us' against 'them'. Furthermore, the statement that his Somali friend expressed the same opinion served to emphasize that Daniel had nothing against all Muslim people and justified his view as a legitimate concern about the threat of Islamization coming from refugees.

These practices and discourses demonstrate that Daniel had learnt about British hierarchies of belonging through his everyday experiences. At his workplace he was trained in a prevalent anti-discriminatory code of practice. He showed an awareness that overt racism was professionally and socially unacceptable. Still, he claimed to have experienced implicit forms of racism, which pushed him below the British majority in the social hierarchies. At the same time, he expressed new forms of British racism, particularly towards refugees, following more familiar and implicit racializing tropes that are prevalent in British society. Hence, Daniel actively participated in constructing hierarchies of belonging, based on his understandings of difference learnt in the process of living with diversity.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed Daniel's complex practices with others, shaped by ambivalently constructed identities, in which he engaged through his everyday routines. In ten years of experiencing diversities, Daniel had learnt new strategies of co-existence, while discarding his old racist habits from Poland. The explicit cosmopolitan practices he first expressed through encounters with other migrants occurred alongside his negative experiences with co-ethnics. Over time they had transformed into civil inattention and convivial experiences that made ethnic and racial difference predominantly ordinary and irrelevant in his daily routines. This newly learnt urban civility, however, did not exclude new forms of racialization that he reinforced and perpetrated. He had learnt British forms of racism as well as civil codes of practice, while being conscious of his perceived stigmatized Polish identity in certain social contexts. His everyday practices reflected ongoing negotiations of gender, racial, ethnic and class identities, through which he reproduced and challenged social hierarchies and sought to improve his own psycho-social and economic status. He demonstrated complex strategies of negotiating difference across various spatial settings. As the first vignette showed, he was able to engage simultaneously in convivial practices, boundary constructing discourses and ethics of indifference. They were contingent upon social context, in terms of his social role and the power relations occurring in given circumstances, as illustrated most clearly in the workplace setting.

Daniel's ambivalent status questions his belonging to British society. He expressed integration by embracing diversity and mixing with cultural others, including white British friends. Nevertheless, his status could be easily undermined by the British majority, as his experiences of perceived marginalisation attest. Thus, his efforts to be a good citizen may have been weakened at any point by exclusion by British people. This undermining occurred alongside social ostracism from Poles back in Poland who did not seem to accept the cosmopolitan habits (Noble, 2013) he had developed in Britain. He seemed to be in-between two national spaces, not white enough for one and too 'polluted' by British diversity for the other.

The final portrait of Anna illustrates similar experiences of embracing diversity with simultaneous exclusion from both British and Polish societies. However, she also demonstrated boundaries of accepting diversity, directed towards refugees and the Somali minority.

### 13 Anna – the limits of embraced diversity

Anna and I managed to catch up today, for the first time in a few weeks. I was supposed to meet her at the nursery to pick up her youngest son with her, but I was late and caught them walking on the way back home. She invited me over for a coffee. Outside her house I tried to find a space to lock my bike and I saw a lamppost just next to the front garden of Anna's next-door neighbour. Anna, who had walked inside already, saw me through the window, walked out in a hurry and told me that I should bring the bike in. It was a warm day in September and her neighbour, a white British woman in her early 50s, was sitting outside with her teenage sons. The woman smiled at Anna and me. We smiled back. I thought it would be easier if I had just locked it outside, but she firmly insisted that I should not. I sensed tension, so I did as she asked. When we walked in, she explained: 'This woman doesn't like immigrants so it's better not to cause any trouble. This lamppost is next to her house so it's best to keep the bike inside.' I did not understand what issues it could have caused but I recognized that Anna was uneasy with the idea and so I complied with her request.

In the house we had no opportunity to sit down. She was too busy preparing food for the family and we spent most of the time in the kitchen, standing while she was cooking. I asked her about how the first few days of school had been, and she replied:

'There are so many *chusty* [headscarves] here. There is one girl working at the school who told me that there is only one white child in Reception this year! One white, one mixed race and everyone else is *Somalia* [sic] (...). My friend's son, an English boy, may change schools because he is *bullied* [in English] by Somali children. His mum told me that he had been hit with a metal rod. And when she complained about it, apparently no one believed her, the head of the school said they were just playing. I told her: "you know what, now they are being racist towards you." She said she considered changing schools because her son doesn't want to go there anymore. He always asks if my son will be there, and if he isn't, he doesn't want to go.'

She then told me that it was Eid and described the meal she was preparing for her husband [Ali, a Muslim man from a North African country]. She cooked a dish, which is traditionally served in his country. She explained Eid to me as:

‘a sort of Polish Christmas but not as much fun. They don’t have anything like a Christmas tree or presents, it’s just a meal. Oh! And they are supposed to wear new clothes [short silence]. Perhaps back in the old days it was something special but now it’s not a big deal to buy new clothes.’

She started cooking the dish, i.e. lamb with pitta bread soaked in stock with some rice and vinegar. She said that she didn't like it but cooked it out of respect for her husband's culture, but apart from him and the youngest son, no one else in the family would eat it. She would try a little bit though 'because it would be impolite not to'. Since the day was supposed to be a celebration, she planned to cook for the other two children whatever they liked most, king prawns for the daughter and chips for the other son. She was going to have leftover hot dogs from the night before. Our conversation was in Polish. Her three children and husband couldn't speak Polish and could not understand what we were talking about. When we moved to the living room, occasionally Anna would switch to English to include her husband in the conversation, but he was busy watching a film and did not appear to be interested in the conversation. When she talked to me about Eid in Polish, she did not sound excited about it, she mentioned that it was nothing special for her, but she needed to do it because of her husband. She appeared to be unimpressed with the tradition and food. When she translated our conversation, speaking to Ali, she made it sound more neutral and even a bit exciting, as a way of helping him to introduce me to his culture. In the three hours I spent with her, I managed to note racialized discourses, convivial interactions and hybridity of cultures and religions, all involving Anna, in the space of her house.

Field notes, September 2015

Anna was 47 at the time of the fieldwork, and married to a North African man with three children. She worked as a shop assistant and relied on the welfare system for financial support. The job did not reflect her educational background. In Poland she studied biotechnology but did not want to pursue a career in the field. After a few months of working in her profession, she left Poland and travelled to Europe, South America and eventually, North Africa, where she met her husband. Educated and fluent in English she settled in Bristol using her cultural capital rather than Polish social networks, which is a typical strategy for Polish people (Ryan et al., 2008). Anna and Ali had lived in Bristol for just over ten years when I met them, and they called it their home. The above

extract from my field notes demonstrates the complexities of lived diversities embedded in Anna's everyday life. She discursively stigmatized Somali parents pointing out their 'race' and religion as problematic, while she was preparing a traditional Eid-meal for her Muslim husband. She stressed an issue of apparent 'reverse racism' (Bell, 2003) in her daughter's school, mostly populated by Somali children, expressing solidarity with her white British neighbour. However, I sensed tensions between her and the white British next-door neighbour, when after exchanging polite smiles and greetings with her, Anna's cautious behaviour resulted from previously experienced hostility. Moreover, her language seemed to be dismissive when she talked about Eid in Polish but became quite enthusiastic when she spoke about it to her husband in English a few minutes later. Thus, one individual in one social setting demonstrated a number of ambivalent practices that engaged with racial ethnic and religious identities inconsistently. Even though the practices appeared to involve conflicting perceptions, these contradictions start making sense when they are looked at from the perspective of Anna's 'in-between' socio-economic status (Barrett and Roediger, 1997) in British society. In this chapter I will elaborate on Anna's complex experiences of lived diversities in various settings. I will demonstrate how her sense of belonging to the diverse neighbourhood, and civility and conviviality she expresses on a daily basis, are intertwined with racialized practices. I argue that these cannot be defined within a positive/negative framework but should be explored as her investment in being a good citizen (Anderson, 2013) and reflect her understandings of the hierarchies of belonging, embedded in her own ambivalent position in Britain.

### 'Good citizen' practices

Anna lived in one of the most diverse and disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Bristol. It is close to the city centre, between new modern-looking blocks of apartments on one side, and industrial less appealing buildings on the other. It can be described as super-diverse. The neighbourhood has a reputation amongst Polish people as one of the most unsafe in Bristol. I came across such opinions on several occasions when speaking to Bristolian-Poles who I met during my fieldwork. It has been defined to me as 'dark, black and dangerous with black gang fights and prostitution on streets'. Despite its unfavourable reputation, Anna does not perceive it as a dangerous place: 'I have been living in this area since I arrived in Bristol in 2004. This is my home. I feel safe here' (Field notes, July 2015). Indeed, she seemed very comfortable in the area. As a mother of three she had established good relationships with the local school and nursery, attended by all her children. Whenever we walked past a local shop, she was recognised and greeted in a friendly manner by local residents or shop assistants and we would often stop for a short chat. Her house is situated in a small and quiet residential area with similarly designed small, redbrick terraced houses built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Anna explained to me that most of the properties were council houses, only

hers and a couple of others were privately rented. The majority of the residents were families with children, mostly migrants, mainly from Somalia. There was a Hungarian family who lived next door, and white British on the other side, as well as a couple of Polish and Sudanese neighbours. White British people were the minority in the immediate area. In such a multicultural environment, the co-existence of different groups, described by Wessendorf as 'commonplace diversity' (Wessendorf, 2014b), can be easily observed as people from different cultural backgrounds 'rub along' (Watson, 2006: 2) on a daily basis in their everyday practices. Indeed, Anna's civil manner with residents and established good relations with the local institutions reflected her multicultural competence.

Her expressed civility may have been learnt prior to moving to Bristol. During her travels around the world she became accustomed to cultural and ethnic difference. She met her husband while working as a tour guide in a North African country. They first lived in his country, but then moved to Poland, where they wanted to settle. They struggled, however, to adjust. Both countries were too conservative for them. In Poland, prevalently Catholic and white, Ali, a Muslim man of colour, experienced everyday racism and discrimination from strangers and Anna's family. Aware of racism affecting their life opportunities, they decided to move to the UK, which they perceived as more liberal, soon after the EU-enlargement in 2004. Anna claims that cultural difference did not strike her as novel since she had come across it before while traveling and living abroad. Both Anna and Ali seemed comfortable in their neighbourhood because of its cultural and ethnic diversity, which did not single her husband out.

Their attachment to the neighbourhood was maintained by good relations with some residents, but they expressed some hostility towards others, namely Somali people. Anna discursively constructed her identity against them, expressed through either religion, race or ethnicity. As I will argue below, such practices reflected her conflicting loyalties as a member of a Muslim family, which often pushed her towards the marginalized status she actively tried to resist.

### The relations with Somali residents

When I saw Anna on the fifth occasion we went to the nursery for the celebration of its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was a big local event organised by the nursery staff, social services and local authorities. Not only were parents invited, but also former teachers and people associated with the nursery such as health practitioners and social services staff. There was a cake sale, face painting, a BBQ, outdoor games for children, visitors from Bristol Zoo, a speech from a local historian and an exhibition showing the history of the nursery. It was a fun family day full of

entertainment for adults and children. I walked around with Anna, listening to her conversations with the nursery staff members, who had different religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Anna interacted with everyone in the same convivial and respectful manner, engaging in discussions about the nursery and the event, catching up with some on a more personal level as she had developed closer bonds with a few teachers. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves, people mingled in the common and familiar space of the nursery, and the event had a community feel to it. The longer we stayed, however, the more I noticed that there was a group of people, i.e. Somali parents, who Anna did not interact with, apart from polite exchanges of smiles. At first, I had the impression that perhaps she had no opportunity to speak to the Somali parents. Yet, observing her more closely, I realised that she was avoiding closer contact with them. When she finished conversing with most of the teachers, we went outside where only Somali women were. We paid for our burgers and I let Anna choose a seat. We were in the middle of the garden, surrounded by other parents and children, but Anna chose not to interact with them and she started talking to me only in Polish, which immediately excluded everyone else from the conversation. We started talking about her daughter's new secondary school she was about to start:

'When I took her there, my husband asked me: "Are there many headscarves there? Is it black or white?" And I was actually surprised how white it is over there, hardly any headscarves. Because here it is just too much! Ninety percent of children in school are Muslim. Last Friday they had their Eid, so from over 300 kids only 60 turned up at school. They should have closed it.

I asked her if it also bothers her husband and she replied:

'Yes, it does, because they don't integrate. When there are Christmas or Easter parties at the school they don't turn up. Hardly anyone came for the Hindu festival Diwali. When you are in this country you should respect its principles. It is a Christian country! But maybe not for much longer because there are so many of them here!'

Field notes, July 2015

The Muslims Anna was talking about were Somalis. Anna, who invested time and effort to develop positive relations with British (white and black) people and a Spanish teacher, did not make any



attempt to engage with Somali parents. In conversation with me, she represented them as a cultural threat and expressed concerns about their dominant presence in the neighbourhood. Highlighting Christianity, she marginalized Somalis pushing them towards the bottom of the national hierarchy, while positioning herself as belonging to the majority. Anna's boundary-making discourse manifested what Hage called 'governmental belonging', i.e. the conviction that one has a right to decide who belongs to the nation. As he argued, whiteness is 'the field of governmental power' (1998: 59) and people who aspire to it express a governmental form of belonging, i.e. exclude those they do not consider as part of the nation. Whiteness is a trait that Anna could relate to when maintaining her status as a good citizen. As a white Christian woman Anna felt entitled to discursively exclude Somali people from membership of British society. She did so using Polish language, in the middle of a multicultural gathering. Thus, the linguistic dimension established social boundaries within a spatial context in which people were otherwise forced to mingle. As Blommaert (2013: 85-89) pointed out multilingual diversity is most likely to produce inclusive public spaces in diverse areas. Nevertheless, in this particular context Anna switched to Polish purposively to discuss Somalis in a negative way. Even though the hostility behind the dialogue was not noticeable, it hindered Anna's engagement in any conversations with Somali women. The social context of the event required from the participants a level of engagement and civility. This was counter-balanced by Anna who was uncomfortable with the presence of Somali women and used Polish to discursively draw a line between 'us' and 'them'.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that Anna has not had any positive encounters with Somali women. On one occasion she told me about a sewing course she had attended and emphasized that there was one woman who was particularly good at sewing and taught the others a few tips. She was Somali. I asked her if the woman could speak English, and Anna confirmed that her English was very good. This positive experience, contradicting her earlier claims about Somalis not speaking English and not being willing to integrate, did not, however, disrupt her discourse about Somalis, who she perceived as one homogenised group, and which she tried to distance herself from. Another time, on the way to school to pick up her children, we had a conversation about the school in which she racially detached her children from the Somali children: 'You know, in this school it is *kolorowo* [colourful/coloured]. My daughter is the only white child in her group, apart from another Polish boy and one more kid. I mean, she is not completely white but [pause] yeah, as I said only her and two other children' (Field notes, July 2015).

Anna, again, used racialized language to describe Somali people, calling them headscarves and describing her daughter's school's population as *kolorowo* [colourful/coloured]. The racial identity of her dual-heritage daughter is presented as white ('the only white child'), then doubted as 'not

completely white', to be eventually reasserted as white again ('only her and other two children'). The narrative serves to draw a boundary between her and Somalis. Although she had a positive encounter with a Somali woman in the settings of a sewing course, it did not seem to alter her other everyday practices, in which she consciously avoided Somali women, based on her racialized understanding of their ethno-religious identity. However, it would be too simplistic to claim that Anna's practices were racist. Her occasional boundary making practices (Wimmer, 2004) seemed to be influenced by her perceptions of who belongs to British society, i.e. people 'who respect the country's principles'. Somalis, who are black, religious and perceived as not British, do not seem to fall into this category. This perception, I argue, is affected by her own ambivalent status in society and the pejorative labels of an immigrant and a Muslim family attached by both Polish and British societies. The latter is illustrated in the quote below:

'I don't have a British passport, but my husband does. Actually, we came here for him, so he could get rid of his "green passport". Because these Arabic passports are green and since that time and what happened with those towers, *nine eleven* [in English] right? Since then, at the border he has been treated every time as if he was carrying some bombs in his luggage. So, it always takes at least half an hour to get through passport control. It's not as easy as waving with a passport and you cross, but they always check him thoroughly. So, we decided that it would make our lives easier if he had a British passport. He was the first person in the family to get it, then the kids. I haven't applied. I don't see the need, not yet. We will see what happens with the EU referendum [laughs].'

First interview, June 2015

This extract demonstrates how the politics of everyday fear (Massumi, 1993) against Muslim people are manifested in public institutions that use symbolic violence at border crossings (Blackwood et al., 2015, Hakli, 2007). The difficulties Ali experienced at airports shows the power relations marking national boundaries, exercised in the form of the enhanced scrutiny of the constructed Other. Anna and her husband have found a way to deal with this stigma by applying for a British passport for him. However, this legal change in status does not protect them from everyday racism and discrimination experienced in their everyday practices, as I will elaborate on in the vignette below.

In the initial interview Anna described an incident which happened to her family a few months earlier. One day she received a call from social services informing her that the police were on the way to her place because the head teacher had reported concerns about Anna's husband physically

abusing their children. Someone noticed a scar on her daughter's arm and deduced that her father must have assaulted her. Fifteen minutes after the call, two police officers and a social worker arrived at her door. They walked in and without much explanation they undressed her three-year-old son and checked him for bruises or any marks of physical violence. Anna recalled how scared, confused and helpless she felt. She thought they would take the children away from her. Her little son cried, and her husband was at work and she could not get in contact with him. They confirmed that her eldest daughter had been taken from school to the hospital for an inspection. The elder son stayed at school and Anna was not allowed to take him home until further notice. Finally, after a couple of hours she received a call from the police confirming that the inspection had not showed any evidence of abuse and that her daughter was on the way home. She ran to school to pick up her son. She saw the head teacher and burst out crying. The lady had tears in her eyes and apologised, but Anna felt betrayed. A few weeks after the incident Ali and Anna received a letter from the social services with a report clearing them of suspicion. However, a BBC article about child abuse in a North African orphanage, in the country where Ali comes from, was attached to the report. Her husband reacted to it with anger and frustration. Even though he was no longer suspected, he interpreted the article as the local services suggesting that he could have abused his children because of where he is from, despite no evidence having been found.

Anna and her husband felt the incident was humiliating and that it questioned their parenting skills. It also raised fears that their children could easily be taken away from them. There is no clear evidence that the incident was racist; nonetheless, Anna and Ali considered it discriminatory. The BBC article attached to the report along with the previous experiences of discriminatory practices by officials towards them, made them question the fairness of the school's procedures. Anna's interactions with the school's staff became more superficial and formal. The incident revealed power relations and the ability of public institutions to misplace the constructed Other regardless of individuals' efforts and intentions. The underlying assumption that it had to do with their ethnic and religious identity questioned Anna's sense of belonging and exposed the contingent status she and Ali had in British society. The feeling of being racialized revealed that the reputable position in the local community they had worked on was challenged. It demonstrated the ways in which symbolic power relations and social hierarchies shaped minorities' everyday lives.

The negative connotations of Muslim identity affected her feelings of belonging, as she became a racialized Other in both Poland and Britain through her relationship with Ali. As Hartigan (1997) also noticed, partners of marginalized individuals may live through experiences of their discrimination. Ali's discrimination affected Anna's everyday life. Her whiteness, Europeaness and Christianity weakened when she was categorized as the wife of a Muslim man. She lived in between

racial, religious but also class identities. She had a higher education degree but lived in a deprived area, used the welfare system and worked as a shop assistant. She tried to resist stigmatization by excluding Somalis on the basis of colour and religion, but she also came across hostile behaviour from the British majority, which questioned her whiteness and therefore sense of belonging. In light of her contingent relations with British people due to her ambivalent socio-economic status, Anna's practices with Somalis could be read as negotiating her negative immigrant/Muslim position. She invested in practices of good citizenship which improved her status and psychologically distanced her from the negative connotations of a threatening, racialized figure of the migrant, which Somalis represented for her. Dimensions of nationality and religiosity are important ones in her understandings of diversity. Race and religion were not significant in her everyday practices with British black Muslim teachers, who she interacted with through convivial practices. Only in her tensions with Somalis did race and religion become the salient issues.

Acting as a good citizen against other people of perceived lower status was manifested differently in settings outside of her neighbourhood. The vignette below illustrates how Chinese students were singled out in the workplace context where Somalis were not present.

### Chinese people as a category of difference

Anna worked in a local shop in an affluent neighbourhood situated close to one of the city's two main universities. It is a predominantly white middle-class area, although Anna encountered quite a lot of cultural diversity due to regular contact with international students. The area where her work is situated has hardly any Somalis. Their absence reveals the class and racial divisions of the city (Tonkiss, 2006: 30-58, Harvey, 1973). In the absence of the kind of ethnic and religious diversity found in her neighbourhood, she negotiated difference at work vis-à-vis Chinese students, who were the most visible minority in the area. Once I visited her in the shop, and she told me an anecdote about one of her Chinese customers. A few days earlier she served a Chinese student who wanted to pay a small amount by card but her card was not signed. Anna could not accept it, but she was happy to verify her signature on the student ID. However, it was slightly different to the name on her card and therefore Anna rejected it as a proof of identity. She described the student's reaction as uncomfortable; apparently, she did not say much but just stared at Anna in awkward silence. She asked her for cash and the young woman began searching her bag, which was taking some time and the queue at the till was growing. Eventually, a British man queuing behind the girl decided to pay for her products. According to Anna, he was getting impatient and wanted to hurry her up. She summarised the student's behaviour in the following words: 'Can you imagine that she was not embarrassed by it at all! She simply said okay, I just couldn't believe it!' As soon as he walked away, the girl found a ten pound note and Anna, who felt in debt to the

customer, ran after the man to give him the small amount he paid and then gave the change back to the girl. The student apparently looked confused, but Anna became irritated with her, thinking that she was disrespectful and should not have expected a stranger to pay for her food. She described the situation by ridiculing the student for her lack of awareness of British customs with a slight irritation at her supposed impoliteness. Even though Anna claimed that she was aware that the experience of a new culture and a lack of English may cause difficulties for Chinese students, she perhaps misinterpreted the student's behaviour, which may have been a sign of embarrassment and confusion rather than a lack of manners or disrespect to others.

In the context of her middle class, ethnically more homogenous workplace, Anna's ascribed Muslim identity as a wife of a Muslim man, was absent. Her class identity as a low-skilled conditional citizen became more salient. In such a social setting, Anna negotiated her identity against Chinese students. She ridicules them by pointing out their supposedly distinctive culture and perceived lack of English language skills as barriers to integration with British society. This is implicitly constructed against her own identity as capable of integrating into British norms.

Observing Anna in a setting outside her diverse neighbourhood enabled me to expand on the relation between her ambivalent status in British society and practices of exclusion directed towards variously defined others. Moreover, it allowed me to observe the fleeting character of understanding and defining difference. Anna's lived diversities consisted of contextually dependent practices, according to social settings and Anna's role within them.

## Conclusion

Lived diversities experienced by Anna were spatially contextual. In her diverse working-class neighbourhood, it was Somali migrants who she racialized to construct her identity against. However, in the more homogenous, middle class workplace, in the absence of the religious and racial diversity that characterised where she lived, she discursively excluded Chinese students as a salient category of Other. In both contexts the Others were individuals perceived as outsiders, whose struggles to fit in with British society were contrasted with Anna's successful integration. These two groups had in common a perceived lack of English language skills, and non-Europeaness. The discursive boundary construction between 'us' and 'them' even though contextually dependent, reflects a postcolonial sentiment of racializing non-European oriental Others (Said, 2003) and claiming belonging on the basis of shared whiteness, understood as power and status. Polish migrants do not share an imperial history with Britain, though their perceptions of racial difference have been influenced by Western imperialism (Moskalewicz, 2005). Moreover, Poles

draw on similarities between British and Polish people based on the European and Christian heritage that they supposedly have in common (Parutis, 2011).

However, it would be too simplistic to reduce Anna's everyday encounters with difference to racism. Her lived diversities reveal contradictions. While she discursively stigmatizes Somali and Chinese people, she demonstrates conviviality in her good relations with black and Muslim British teachers, her inter-racial and inter-faith marriage. Most of her interactions with others were civil or convivial and relations ran without conflicts or tensions. Her exclusionary practices focused on particular minorities were contingent upon social context within specific settings, their visibility in those contexts, as well as her own ambivalent position in British society. Anna claimed to have experienced discriminatory practices on the grounds of being Polish and/or a wife of a Muslim North-African man. These were intertwined with her stigmatized working-class identity that concealed her educational background and previous work experience. Thus, her everyday encounters with others reflected the ambivalence of her own socio-economic status and efforts to do well as a citizen. In her endeavours to maintain a 'tolerated citizen' status and aspirations to become a good citizen, one of 'us', she alternated between convivial, racist and urban indifference practices. My methodology allowed me to unravel the complexities and ambiguities in her everyday practices that the literature that focuses on practices in a particular social site is unable to discover. Such contradictions in everyday practices were noticeable in other participants as well. They were also contingent upon the time of settlement in the UK.

## 14 Conditional citizens and everyday lived diversities

My research looks at Polish citizens' lived diversities and explores the processes of learning and coming to terms with racial, ethnic and religious difference. As set out in my empirical chapters, I investigated this process by following ten participants throughout their routines rather than fixing the research enquiry on specific social/spatial settings. Focusing on individuals and their everyday practices across different context helps to unravel the complexities of their lived diversities. But it risks isolating these experiences as individual stories and neglecting the shared and structural dimensions of integration. In this chapter I reflect on these broader, shared experiences and consequences of negotiating difference and integrating in Britain and elaborate on the main contributions of my research to the literature on lived diversities.

I demonstrate how newcomers to Britain shape their understandings of its multicultural population within a broader context of national hierarchies of belonging. I stress that Poles' practices with others are often inconsistent and contradictory. To explain this, I situate them within a national context that constructs hierarchies of belonging. As conditional citizens in Britain, Poles demonstrate both strategies of inclusion and exclusion as part of their experiences of lived diversities. These indicate their tolerated status which is internalized by Poles, who often describe themselves as guests in Britain, and they seek to be recognised as good guests through practices of distancing themselves from stigmatizing others and performing multicultural competence. My research contributes to the literature on everyday lived diversities with its methodological approach. Taking individuals and their daily routines as units of analysis was crucial in gathering insights into people's understandings of diversity and interactions with difference. The 'go-along' observation method across various social settings allowed me to investigate in a systematic way the intricacies and ambivalences entrenched in peoples' practices with others. It also enabled me to comprehend the broader context shaping these understandings.

In this chapter I reflect on my findings by firstly discussing the main insights offered by my methodological approach. I divide the themes threading through my empirical chapters into three sections, negotiating segregated diversity, ambivalent practices and individuals' stories. The first section discusses the impact of segregated diversity in the city on individuals' encounters with difference. In section 2, I move onto elaborating the ambivalence entrenched in everyday practices and discuss what modes of interactions are performed by participants within the prevailing code of urban civility. Finally, in the third section, I demonstrate the link between respondents' direct encounters with others and their life stories to understand the broader context of the learning process of living with diversity. Rather than observing direct interactions only, this research

considers people's narratives following the encounters as well as their previous experiences with diversity. Having discussed the main findings I then elaborate on the broader context in which they take place. I connect Poles' experiences with British hierarchies of belonging and argue that Poles' ambivalent status in Britain shapes their lived diversities. They negotiate their conditional citizenship through strategies of inclusion and strategies of exclusion towards minorities and the white British majority. As I argue, their perceptions and everyday practices in relation to racial, ethnic and religious difference cannot be fully comprehended without conceptualizing them within British hierarchies of belonging.

### The contradictory practices of living together

In this section I will elaborate on my methodological contributions. Firstly, I argue that individuals engage to various degrees with encountered diversity and explore how lived diversities can be either an inclusive or a segregated experience. Secondly, I investigate individuals' contradictory encounters with others and claim that the various strategies of engagement are practices rather than dispositions. Finally, I elaborate on my focus on individuals and the broader context affecting direct encounters, such as their background, perceptions and previous experiences of diversity.

### Negotiating segregated diversity

Seeing encounters with difference through the neighbourhood lens gives an insight into the ways in which frequent and regular contact with cultural others develops familiarity with ethnic, racial and religious difference. The literature on everyday multiculturalism points to the ethics of mixing and how people follow a normative code of behaviour that demonstrates acceptance of cultural diversity. This normalization of difference in everyday lives is described by Wessendorf as 'commonplace diversity' (2014b). Others conceptualise it as conviviality (Radice, 2016, Rzepnikowska, 2011), everyday multiculturalism (Neal et al., 2013, Neal et al., 2015), or unpanicked multiculturalism (Noble, 2009). These scholars emphasize strategies of coming to terms with difference and elaborate on practices that treat diversity as an ordinary feature in peoples' lives. Nevertheless, the focus on diverse neighbourhoods constructs diversity as spatially bounded. Living with difference is perceived in terms of direct encounters with others, empirically observable through ethnographic studies, which take specific, spatially bounded diverse settings as units of analysis. However, such an approach risks reducing everyday lived diversities to interactions within these neighbourhoods and settings because it risks omitting other social contexts and settings of people's day to day experiences. While it may be true for elderly residents (Wise, 2006) whose mobility across the city is potentially limited, this does not apply to working age migrants, who tend to be mobile and whose lives are not necessarily confined to their neighbourhoods. My



methodology allowed me to explore lived diversities beyond the diverse neighbourhood focus and investigate how people's encounters with difference may be shaped by and across different contexts.

My data suggest that people who live in diverse neighbourhoods have various experiences of their neighbourhood's diversity. Some may live ethnically segregated lives due to their poor English language skills, while others may choose to have little connection with their local community. The level of involvement with (super)diverse neighbourhoods varies upon personal circumstances. Anna and Kasia who both have school age children, are required to interact with local residents when dropping off and picking up their children at local schools and participating in school and nursery events. They both work part time and spend most of their time in the local area, looking after their children. They are exposed to difference at a neighbourhood level by these involuntary (and gendered) interactions. And while Anna is involved in local community life, Kasia's encounters do not produce much contact due to a lack of English language skills. This is different to Paulina's and Adam's experiences. They do not have children, they work outside their residential neighbourhoods and socialize with friends in the city centre. Thus, their encounters with their immediately local population are limited compared to Kasia's or Anna's motherhood commitments. Their everyday lives are focused around activities mostly situated in different parts of Bristol, meaning that the neighbourhood's diversity is experienced sporadically, usually in the context of shopping or using local services. These experiences are predominantly positive, and they contribute to shaping a feeling of belonging to the local community, as both Paulina and Adam emphasized. Nevertheless, this community is understood differently by Kasia and Anna, who encountered problems with their children's school authorities. Concerns about teachers' apparently suspicious attitudes towards their parental skills made them anxious or wary about their behaviour around school staff members. Their engagement within their neighbourhoods creates more channels of encounter with local residents than Paulina and Adam. However, negative experiences with local authorities means that their sense of belonging is in question. Thus, even though all participants express and maintain commonplace diversity, their subjective understandings of (super)diverse neighbourhoods differ due to their family and employment status. They are part of a diverse population. It is important to note that their social relations with local institutions shaped their experiences of diverse neighbourhoods beyond the inter-cultural interactions which the literature on everyday multiculturalism is often preoccupied with (Wise and Noble, 2016, Noble, 2013, Padilla et al., 2015, Radice, 2016, Jones et al., 2015).

The various levels of engagement with diverse neighbourhoods suggest that in more homogenous areas individuals' encounters with difference may also vary. Indeed, the likelihood of encountering

cultural others is greater in (super)diverse neighbourhoods and it may ease familiarization with difference. However, as discussed, it does not necessarily lead to meaningful encounters or the appreciation of ethnic others. Some individuals may experience diversity more meaningfully in more ethnically homogenous areas than in diverse ones. Simon, for instance, lives in a predominantly white neighbourhood. However, his house is shared with other EU citizens and overseas migrants with whom he interacts on a daily basis. Other than that, he does not engage in the life of his neighbourhood, he does not use local services, perceived in the literature as contact zones (Wise, 2004, Wise, 2010, Rzepnikowska, 2016a). His experience of living in that area is concentrated around his multicultural house and the bonds he has created with his housemates. In contrast, Paulina and Adam, who live in a diverse area and engage with the neighbourhood in commercial contexts, have moved into a house with mostly Polish people. They live with their partners and two Polish friends. They have created a home, a safe space where they can maintain transnational practices, such as speaking Polish, cooking Polish food and celebrating Polish Christmas or Easter together. They do converse in English and engage in activities with a couple of non-Polish flatmates. However, with most housemates being Polish, the house creates a sense of normality by reproducing Polishness (Rabikowska, 2010a: 294). It is in their workplaces that both Adam and Paulina come across others in a more meaningful way.

Hence, I argue that people from the same neighbourhoods may negotiate encountered difference in a number of ways. Demographically diverse or more homogenous areas do not necessarily determine the level of engagement with its population. Having said that, I do not argue that frequency and regularity of contact with difference does not affect people's understandings of diversity. I claim that the division of the city across racial and class lines influences everyday lived diversities. I propose conceptualizing diversity beyond the spatial context of diverse settings in order to understand how the ethnic, religious and class segregation of urban spaces is understood and lived through everyday experiences by individuals. Even though Britain is diverse, the diversity within the country is not dispersed equally. As Nayak argues, the everyday lives of Bangladeshi Muslim women in the north of England, where the percentage of ethnic minorities is relatively low, is pervaded by everyday racism (Nayak, 2017). I also explore how difference is encountered in less diverse areas, although within the context of a diverse city. Poles, who share whiteness with the British majority, settle relatively easily in white neighbourhoods where racial or religious difference is sporadic and less regular. The absence of certain minorities, i.e. Muslims and people of colour, in particular neighbourhoods in Bristol is politically meaningful, since it demonstrates how whiteness and Christianity are implicitly reproduced as a norm that spatially orders people into hierarchies of deservingness. Moving beyond the spatial dimension helps us to conceptualise diversity in political

terms and explore how social inequality in the city based on race, ethnicity and class is reflected in hierarchical social relations that are manifested in everyday lived diversities.

Bristol's economic inequalities and racialized hierarchies are reflected in the demographic divisions of the city. The centrally located areas of concentration of ethnic minorities are socially and economically deprived. Additionally, the predominantly white British areas are economically segregated. Some white working-class estates, situated in the suburbs, are also the most impoverished estates in the city, while the most affluent neighbourhoods are where predominantly white British upper and middle classes settle (Bristol City Council, 2017). It is not surprising that encounters with difference are contingent upon the spatial location of an individual's neighbourhood or workplace. Some of my respondents, Marcin, Monika, Ewa and Tomek, who have settled in white working-class areas, hardly ever come across certain differences. Monika works in a neighbourly white middle-class neighbourhood and spends most of her time with her Polish family and friends as well as white British colleagues and local residents. Ewa's workplace is situated a fifteen-minute walk from her flat and, therefore, her encounters with diversity are mostly restricted to familiar ethnic others in the supermarket she works in. Marcin works in a more diverse area at the opposite end of the city, however, he commutes by car and does not come into direct contact with local residents. Even though the neighbourhood is quite diverse, he works only with white British men and has no opportunity to encounter ethnic others. Tomek, on the other hand, works at a construction site in various locations. However, his workplace is ethnically segregated and apart from his Romanian co-worker he typically works with Polish people, occasionally meeting his white British employers.

In areas where ethnic difference is rarely encountered, other differences may come to play a significant role. Monika, for instance, is acute to perceived class difference between her and the other residents in her neighbourhood. She condemns the inappropriate behaviour of local boys and detaches herself from the perceived working-class identity of her neighbours by demonstrating middle-class practices. Marcin also seems to emphasize class as an important identity. However, he racializes it. During one catch up he used the purifying language of a 'clean and tidy' affluent white area and compared it to the black neighbourhood of his workplace, which he described as dirty. Living and working in less diverse areas may result in limited contact with difference and super-diversity becomes an abstract term, not experienced through encounters. However, it is present discursively. Monika, who rarely visits super-diverse areas, learns about them from her friend who is a Teaching Assistant and shares her knowledge with Monika about the local Muslim minority, stigmatizing it as backward. Similarly, Tomek, who has never visited one of Bristol's neighbourhoods mostly populated by the black minority, repeats the negative discourses

overheard from other Poles about its apparent criminality, which they associate with black gang violence and drug abuse. Even though racial and ethnic difference is mainly invisible in their everyday interactions and often reduced to commercial contexts in the city centre, its discursive presence shapes their understandings of racial and ethnic others and opinions about diversity. Hence, those of my respondents who lived and worked in predominantly white areas were more likely to habitually reproduce hegemonic whiteness, where the noticeable presence of non-white bodies disturbed but also reinforced habitual whiteness as a norm (Ahmed, 2007).

Authors who investigate everyday lived diversities tend to focus on super-diverse locations, either neighbourhoods or specific settings, including workplaces. My method of accompanying participants living and working in various neighbourhoods allowed me to explore the relationship between the context, practices and subjective knowledge entrenched in everyday routines (Semi et al., 2009). My participants' lives represented tales of different cities within Bristol. Their engagement with diverse residents varied according to their subjective experiences of the city. My approach of researching individuals from various locations in Bristol enabled me to conceptualize lived diversities beyond the spatially-bounded contexts that characterise most studies of super-diversity. I suggest looking at lived diversities as everyday understandings and experiences of multicultural society shaped by demographic changes, contingent upon broader contexts and embedded in the spatial division of urban spaces. This led me to another conclusion, which was the entrenched ambivalence of everyday practices with others.

### Ambivalent practices

My research unravels how people engage in various, often contradictory, strategies of negotiating difference. It demonstrates that various forms of encounter such as everyday cosmopolitanism, everyday racism or conviviality are practices rather than dispositions, which can change according to social context. Studies which methodologically focus on sites of direct encounters point out the various ways in which people integrate into multicultural societies by coming to terms with the variety of cultures and ethnicities encountered in mundane practices through habituation to cosmopolitan practices (Noble, 2013, Wise, 2006). The existence of other practices, including everyday racism, is often acknowledged but not necessarily considered as an integral part of lived diversities (Wise and Velayutham, 2009, Wessendorf, 2014b). This is not to say that the literature on lived diversities does not recognize contradictory strategies of negotiating difference that people apply in their everyday lives. Amanda Wise, for example, makes a claim that there is no neat division between 'good multiculturalists' and 'bad racists', arguing that '[p]eople's views and experiences of 'Otherness' are inevitably fluid and contextual' (Wise, 2006: 183). However, by

focusing on one strategy, it is rarely demonstrated how these contrasting experiences are intertwined in everyday lives.

My contribution to the literature lies in exploring these practices and revealing how they are entangled in everyday routines. My methodology enabled me to unravel the contradictory and fleeting character of recognising difference and acting upon it. Because I focused my research on individuals rather than particular spatial contexts, I explored strategies of negotiating difference in various social sites. All of my participants demonstrated the ability to follow the prevailing code of practice that expresses urban civility towards diversity (Lofland, 1989). While in some contexts it represented genuine indifference to difference, it was often intertwined with other practices such as racialized discourses or active avoidance of difference. Thus, I look at the ambiguous experiences people have when encountering difference, while following the perceived prevailing code of conduct. Hence, my approach enabled me to explore what these ethics of indifference meant in various contexts.

As my findings suggest, everyday practices with cultural others interweave with other strategies of living together, which are often contradictory. People, who come across difference in their daily lives, can express everyday cosmopolitanism, racism, conviviality or indifference to difference. These do not occur separately but can be intertwined in daily routines, in which individuals navigate between conscious efforts to cross cultural boundaries, unforced 'rubbing along together', explicit hostility or everyday racism. The strategies of encountering others are inconsistent and as I elaborated on, may change within minutes depending on social context. The weaving of various practices occurs on different levels. One individual can engage in hostile and convivial practices towards a person categorized as a racial or ethnic Other. As I demonstrated in chapter 5, Paulina expressed conviviality in her encounters with a local shop assistant, originally from Sri Lanka, in an off-licence that she visited regularly. They created a bond resulting from regular visits and they followed a civil code of practice towards each other in a familiar place. This, however, did not exclude her involvement in racializing discourses about him with her Polish flatmates and her husband a few minutes after she had visited the shop. It cannot be argued, though, that her friendly approach was not genuine or that she was *really* racist a few minutes later. She *did* both. And both strategies were genuine in the given social contexts, not exclusive of one another but mutually co-existing.

The contradictory practices may occur within the same spatial context, although directed towards various cultural others. Anna's interactions in a nursery, elaborated in chapter 4, are another example of individuals doing both rather than being one or another. Unlike Paulina, who engaged

in different practices towards the same Other, Anna was able to express conviviality towards white and black Muslim British teachers while avoiding Somali residents present at the same event. Anna negotiated her identity between strategies of openness towards teachers she was fond of and avoidance of Somali parents. While she engaged in convivial conversations with the former, she expressed civil inattention towards the latter, accompanied by negative talk about them with me. She was, therefore, neither simply cosmopolitan nor simply racist. Rather she performed various often inconsistent practices in the same social contexts. Similarly, Ewa engaged in contradictory practices when I met up with her in a café, an event described earlier in the chapter. Expressing indifference towards customers and staff members she spent most of our catch up discussing 'the refugee crisis' and vocalizing concerns about the perceived Islamization of Europe. This occurred while we sat next to a Muslim family of an ethnic minority background. The apparent inattention happened while she engaged in a discussion where she racialized refugees as a cultural threat. Hence, as my data suggest, people engage in ambivalent practices when encountering others and negotiate boundaries in inconsistent ways. On numerous occasions my participants demonstrated adjustment to specific social contexts and acted upon the perceptions of the expected code of conduct. Nevertheless, this did not exclude negative practices. Focusing on micro-geographies within social sites allowed me to explore ambivalent ways of negotiating difference. These were driven by people's understandings of difference and applied in everyday encounters with cultural others, altering practices according to perceived social expectations in a given context. My research enabled me to explore how racism or inter-ethnic tensions co-exist together with convivial or cosmopolitan practices within a prevailing code of conduct demonstrating civil inattention.

### Lived diversities and individuals' stories

Revealing the ambivalent character of individual practices was possible due to my methodological focus on observing my participants' direct encounters, listening to their narratives about the encounters and gathering insights into their life stories. Having spent a significant amount of time with my participants, I gradually learnt about their socio-economic backgrounds and their migration journeys. This knowledge helped me to contextualise the practices that I observed in situ. When I participated in their everyday routines, either at their homes, workplaces, cafés, leisure centres etc., I was able to connect knowledge about them and their narratives about cultural others with observed encounters with difference. This insight into the various aspects of their everyday lives enabled me to reflect on the complexities and contradictions of their lived diversities. Even though I focused on Polish citizens only, I suggest that their understandings of difference do not rely solely on presumed Polish affiliation – or somehow on their 'Polishness'. Their migration journeys, social and cultural capital as well as the broader socio-economic context in which they

were settling are significant for how they define and negotiate difference and unravel the fleeting character of these negotiations. I learnt how their values and attitudes towards difference learnt in Poland were transformed and adapted to the British context. My methodology allowed me to see that individuals' lived diversities are fragile, constantly changing, unfixed and context-dependent. Contradictory practices are contextualized in my participants' migration stories, backgrounds, previous experiences and social relations they have developed in British society. The ambivalent strategies of encountering difference become intelligible when the broader context is taken into account. While I argue that social contexts, in which individuals interact with others, matter in how they understand and define difference, the encounters are also influenced by their perceptions and aspirations which they have developed through their personal life journeys. Not only are their practices situated within specific spatial and temporal contexts, but they also reflect perceptions and previously gained experiences and understandings of diversity. Encounters with difference depend upon personal experiences within a broader social context. Everyday encounters are exchanges that reveal people's awareness and contestation of their ascribed statuses within these social hierarchies. People's knowledge about diversity is situated within the specific context of British cultural repertoires (Lamont and Mizrachi, 2012). In the next section I will analyse how Poles' understandings of diversity are impacted by the British context of hierarchies of belonging.

### Lived diversities as situated within British hierarchies of belonging

As I have elaborated so far, lived diversities consist of perceptions, subjective experiences and direct encounters with others, negotiated within specific social settings. In the previous section I discussed the contributions of my methodological approach in investigating the ambiguous strategies people tend to engage in while learning to live with diversity in various social contexts. As I will elaborate in this section, these understandings and interactions are constructed within the broader political and socio-economic context in Britain. The ways in which Poles comprehend diversity and particular cultural others, and act upon these conceptions, occur within available British 'cultural repertoires' that establish national hierarchies of belonging. National discourses constructing migrants' desirability around class gender race and ethnicity, combined with discourses which relate citizenship to values of hard work and deservingness constitute the context in which Poles understand diverse British society. Poles' conditional citizenship, i.e. their ambivalent socio-economic status in terms of ethnicity, race and class, is reproduced in their everyday lived diversities. Below, I will argue that the Poles in my study tended to internalize their status in terms of a host/guest discourse. I will then elaborate on strategies of inclusion and exclusion that are applied to maintain their status in society.

### Conditional citizens and the host/guest discourse

Conditional citizenship is constructed by notions of a good citizen and whiteness in British society. Poles represent what Bridget Anderson has termed 'tolerated citizens', that is, newcomers who fit in hierarchies of belonging somewhere between the good citizens and the failed or non-citizens. The former meet citizenship criteria, characterized by liberal ideals such as individualism, autonomy, freedom, belonging and property, while failed or non-citizens use the welfare system and are involved in criminal or illegal activities that are perceived as unworthy and disappointing. Poles as tolerated citizens are legal economic migrants, who see themselves as hard working and contributing to society (Datta and Brickell, 2009, Friberg, 2012). However, they are only contingently accepted, since by virtue of their national otherness they are associated with non-citizens. They are tolerated as long as they meet high standards set by good citizens. Engaging in condemned activities, such as using the welfare system or conducting criminal offenses, push them down to the failed or non-citizens category.

As Anderson argued, the politics of immigration control underpin a hierarchy of perceived deservedness in contemporary British society. They construct certain standards of the nation, 'the community of values' and order people around them (Anderson, 2013). But the conditional citizenship of Poles is also driven by British racial hierarchies. Whiteness is one of the most highly valued traits in British society. It is a taken for granted value (Frankenberg, 1997, Ahmed, 2004) that sets the norms in societies, maintaining its privileges of status and power (Garner, 2007). The whiteness of Poles and other East Europeans is contested, however. The ambivalence of their position is represented in their in-betweenness (Barrett and Roediger, 1997), they are white, Christian and legal on the one hand (McDowell, 2009) and racialized as East European threatening the British welfare system and the labour market on the other (Fox et al., 2012). Although Poles enjoy some privileges of whiteness, they are marked as cultural others at the same time. Their white identity does not exempt them from marginalization and discriminatory practices (Burnett, 2011). As I will argue below, this ambivalent status of Poles is embedded in their identity and reflected in understandings of and everyday encounters with cultural others. According to my findings, the way in which Poles seem to respond to their status is twofold: they internalize their inferior position, while making claims of belonging to British society. They maintain their conditional citizenship using strategies of exclusion and strategies of inclusion. Most of my respondents used the host/guest discourse at some point of the fieldwork to describe their position in British society. I claim that this reflects their awareness of the limits of their conditional citizenship and their efforts to overcome them by performing perceived good citizenship practices.

The host/guest discourse is vividly illustrated by Monika, re-stated below:



‘Actually, this is what I don’t like in this country. Tolerance pushed to its limits, right? (...) They are from Somalia, aren’t they? And they try to establish their own rules. Because if you come to this country, you should recognize the laws of this country, respect everything that is here, including the law and religion. If your faith is different and you do not you like it, nobody is keeping you here, right? But do not change it, it is not your country, right? I can’t stand it, I came to this country and have respected every single piece of this land since. Every single piece of a person who lives here, right? (...) Because I am [short pause] I was [emphasised] a guest, right? Now I’m a resident of this country, right? [see pages 119-120]

All of my respondents participated in this discourse of host and ‘good’ guest at some point during the fieldwork. Some, similarly to Monika, emphasized their whiteness and Christianity. Anna and Ewa also criticised the Somali minority for disrespecting the country’s Christian principles. A similar argument was made by Daniel with regards to refugees. Thus, all of them stressed religion as an important indicator of the respectable conduct of a Polish guest, juxtaposed against the Muslim minority’s religiosity which was interpreted as a sign of contempt towards British culture. Others stressed the values of hard work and the financial contributions they made to society. Adam, whose everyday practices represented his efforts to perform perceived Britishness, emphasized his gratitude to British society for giving him employment opportunities and expressed his appreciation by investing in ideals of hard work. He believed that he would be recognized as a valuable member of society as long as he contributed to it with his work ethic. Marcin, likewise, stressed hard work as a trait of Polish citizens and contrasted it with the laziness of overseas migrants (of colour), who, as he claimed, came to Britain to live off benefits. Simon, was also grateful for the better paid work options he found in Britain and called himself ‘just a guest’ when he discussed the potential result of the EU referendum, raising the prospect of his possible return to Poland. My participants expressed an awareness of not being equal to British citizens, by calling themselves guests and expressing gratitude for the hospitality they received. They contrasted it with the lack of appreciation from other minorities and migrants. Moreover, perceived discrimination from British people reinforced the idea of conditional citizenship. The difference embedded in Polish people’s nationality, negatively represented in public discourses (Spigelman, 2013, Fitzgerald and Smoczynski, 2015, Fomina and Frelak, 2008) was often speculated about when my respondents encountered white British people. They often felt mistreated and interpreted negative experiences with white British people as racist or discriminatory. These perceptions reveal the contingent relationship that my respondents internalized through feelings of discomfort and constant

questioning of their belonging. It demonstrates that to some extent they were self-conscious about their inferior status due to their national otherness.

The host/guest discourse is often discussed in the literature analysing discourses of receiving countries. Derrida, developing the concept of hospitality, pointed to the unequal power relations embedded in the discourse, maintaining a superior/inferior relationship between natives and migrants (Still, 2013, Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). The notion of a host implies moral attributes of being generous and kind. However, the host also determines the conditions under which the guest can visit their home. Thus, there is a tension between openness to others and limits which define who a host can accept and under what circumstances. This dialectic relationship set by the discourse constitutes migrants as indefinite others. Capdevila and Callaghan suggested that the hospitality rhetoric is reproduced by British society that welcomes migrants '...as long as they behave in an appropriate manner, as long as they are judged to be a suitable guest' (2008: 9). Opening your home to strangers may lead to the abuse of your hospitality by them, an argument often emphasised to support restrictive immigration controls. The politics of fear at the core of the immigration policies and public discourses reinforce the host/guest rhetoric leading to paranoid nationalism, constant worrying about the nation, making 'the host' less hospitable towards the 'unwanted guests' (Ehrkamp, 2006). However, the hosts need immigrants since their national identities are defined against the constructed other. Inda (2000) describes contemporary Western countries as pathological nations where migrants and nations feed on each other's bodies but cannot live without one another.

While the literature mentioned above discussed it from the perspective of the host country, my data show how this discourse is internalized by the constructed other, namely by Polish citizens defining themselves as guests. Following Jenkins's (1994) definition of social identity, I understand the ethnic identity of Poles as mutually defined by self-identification (what it means to be Polish) and external categorisation (how British define Polish people). Hence, in the boundary construction of their identity it matters how they define what it means to belong to a Polish group as well as how British people define what Polishness is. Poles internalize the inferior category of guests imposed by the British context and defend themselves within this discourse as 'respectful guests'. To do so, they apply strategies of exclusion and strategies of inclusion. Thus, they often define themselves as good guests by categorizing the others as bad guests and showing how their practices fall into the former category. The process of identification of minorities occurs within cultural repertoires that equip individuals with certain strategies to articulate their responses (Lamont et al., 2013, Fleming et al., 2012). Poles perform good citizenship through strategies of

exclusion, of racialized practices towards people of colour, and strategies of inclusion that reinforce their own integration.

### The strategies of exclusion

My participants used certain cultural tools to categorize others. They implicitly emphasized whiteness and Christianity as traits characterizing 'good citizenship' and claim these as common for them and British people. The stigmatized Other in the discourses of my participants was often depicted in the figure of Muslim or black minorities and refugees. They described the appropriate behaviour of good guests, as contributing to society, respecting its religion and its principles via discourses criticizing the cultural Other for being non-white, non-Christian and non-hardworking. This in turn suggested that Poles are more deserving citizens, by implicitly reinforcing their whiteness, Christianity and work ethic. Exclusionary practices were utilized to construct boundaries and reinforce the image of Poles as respectful guests contrasting with the undesirable racial and religious others. This supports arguments made by other scholars that the A8 accession workers use racism and racialization as a tool to gain psycho-social and material benefits and position themselves above people of colour in British hierarchies (Fox et al., 2015, Parutis, 2011, Rzepnikowska, 2016b). I argue further that they use whiteness, associated with Europeaness and Christianity, because it is an available cultural repertoire. Whiteness is still seen as a core aspect of British citizenship, rather than multicultural or hybrid conceptions of British national identity. The post-colonial melancholia that, according to Gilroy (2004), continues to underpin British national identity, implicitly reinforces the idea of whiteness associated with a longing for the greatness of the British Empire. 'Imperial racism' as Flemmen and Savage (2017) further stressed is reproduced by white British elites, whose class identity is crucial in constituting racial hierarchies. The privileging of whiteness is illustrated by Bennett et al. (2009), who argue that ethnic minorities feel estranged in relation to mainstream British culture dominated by white English norms. Likewise, Nayak provided evidence of questioned belonging amongst British Bangladeshi youth in prevalently white urban areas in Britain, claiming that everyday encounters 'can perform as a means of purging the nation and exerting white territoriality' (Nayak, 2017: 290). Exploring narratives of young South Asian people from Newcastle about their everyday practices in the education and leisure settings he argued that everyday racism, spatial segregation between white majority and minorities of colour and social segregation in supposedly inclusive contexts are not uncommon and demonstrate the precarious form of multiculturalism (Nayak, 2017: 294), based on the contingent relationship between white and British Bangladeshi residents. Whiteness is still associated with status, power and a reference point by which to assess people of colour (Garner, 2007, Frankenberg, 1997). Whiteness is, therefore, a useful tool to enhance Poles' status in Britain. The participants of my

study often made implicit references to their whiteness as a form of privilege. The longer they had lived in Britain, the more likely they were to use British forms of racism (Fox and Mogilnicka, 2017). Poles use whiteness as a British cultural repertoire reinforced by racialized identity politics that still do not acknowledge colonial history and continue the exclusion of people of colour (Bhambra, 2017).

Moreover, the investment in the idea of Poles as hard working was contrasted with the laziness of people of colour who supposedly preferred using the welfare system. The majority of Polish people who have settled in Britain since 2004 are in employment, most of them in the low and unskilled labour sectors (Pollard et al., 2008: 30-38). The main motivation in coming to Britain is employment, and Poles are willing to undertake posts which do not meet their educational background (Eade et al., 2007). This was also the case of most of my respondents, especially when they first arrived in Britain, and most did not mind performing unskilled physical labour, while some gradually moved upwards on the career ladder. The discourse of the worthiness of migrants as long as they contribute to society economically is reinforced in order to maintain their tolerated citizen status within socio-economic hierarchies. The construction of a reliable and honest Polish worker (Friberg, 2012) against the lazy migrant of colour reinforces the contemporary wages of whiteness (Roediger, 1999) and positions Poles not only economically but also racially as the more desirable 'other' in British society. McDowell et al. (2007) argue that immigration policies allowing new EU member states to work in Britain while imposing work restrictions to overseas migrants serve to continue the whitewashing of British society. The discourses of my respondents demonstrate how these political changes are understood and interpreted as British people valuing their presence and work ethic more than that of non-white newcomers.

### The strategies of inclusion

The host/guest discourse represents an awareness of their ambivalent status as conditional citizens and their strategies of negotiating it. Through strategies of exclusion, Poles claim that they are the good guests and push 'the migrant problem' onto minorities and migrants of colour. To protect their fragile status, Poles try to distance themselves from the various meanings of a bad guest. However, in order to fit in they also apply strategies of inclusion. Denial of racism (Fox et al., 2015, van Dijk, 1992) was one of the discourses I observed also amongst some of my participants who had met with hostility from British people. Marcin and Monika, for example, parked their car in a residential area when they went to vote in Polish government elections. Upon their return they found a note behind the window wipers, saying: 'Fucking Poles, go back to your country'. Marcin explained it to me as a 'typical behaviour' from people who live on benefits and want to blame someone else for their misfortune. He stressed a problematically perceived culture of the working

class while denying that the note had racist connotations. Similarly, when Ewa recalled once having experienced racist name calling on a street, she justified it as a one-off drunk incident, trivializing its implications by putting the blame on the drunkenness of a man rather than racist intentions.

The other strategy to fit in with British society was following a code of civility towards diversity. My respondents tried to demonstrate that they felt relaxed around racial, ethnic and religious differences that they were encountering for the first time in Britain. The conscious work Paulina and Daniel had invested in being cosmopolitan is an example of this strategy. Having friends of various ethnic backgrounds was perceived as a sign of integration into multicultural society. They discursively differentiated themselves from Poles who were not willing to mix with others and had only Polish social networks. They saw themselves as more integrated because of their networks with racial and ethnic others. As Paulina stated, her Polish friends were troubled by the diversity in her neighbourhood, whereas she claimed to have come to terms with it and had apparently stopped noticing difference. Thus, cosmopolitan practices were used to demonstrate that she had become an integral part of British society.

Monika, on the other hand had not developed strong networks with diverse others, her closest friends were Polish and white English. However, she expressed civility towards racial and ethnic difference encountered in her daily life. She struggled to accept explicitly racist comments from the Polish cleaner working with her and reprimanded her husband, Marcin, on a few occasions for making crude racist jokes. She had learnt over the years to be at ease with difference and recognised that the crude forms of racism expressed by other Poles were inappropriate in the British context. She had internalized a British code of conduct and had started policing other Poles who did not follow it. Being British means accepting diversity so that racist views are not expressed openly. Even Tomek, who described himself as racist, performed indifference in public spaces. He was aware of the prevailing code of practice and was capable of expressing multicultural competence, despite claims that he 'does not like black people'. He adjusted to what he perceived as normal conduct because he thought this is expected from him in British society. Otherwise, racist practices would be interpreted as social gaffs (Goffman, 1971a) and could potentially expose him as the other who does not fit in. Adam was keen to integrate into British society and performed, what he believed are, British practices. One of them, as he learnt from other Poles, who had lived in Bristol longer and had already gained knowledge about British multicultural society, was 'undoing racism'. He invested conscious effort in unlearning the racism acquired in Poland and tried to show his appreciation of racial and ethnic diversity in his neighbourhood by using local services and being friendly with local residents.

Being relaxed around difference, expressed either by cosmopolitanism, indifference or conviviality, was a strategy of inclusion. My respondents made an effort to demonstrate that they understood the prevailing norms and tried to be good guests by following them. Poles in my study integrated into British society by showing their ability to get along with cultural others as most of the time in their daily routines they rubbed along with others without any conflict. The multicultural competence they acquired made them feel part of British society. Over time difference became unnoticed in their daily routines. The practices that went against prevailing norms were condemned by those who had internalised the ethic of indifference. The performance of being relaxed around difference was often justified as a tolerant attitude towards other minorities. Although my participants seemed to appreciate diversity, they reinforced racial hierarchies of belonging through discourses of tolerance. Hage argued that Australian nationalism implicitly privileges whiteness in multicultural society through claimed tolerance, which reveals power relations and diminishes the status of minorities in society (Hage, 1998). My respondents used the guest/host discourse to make similar points. They often claimed that they tolerated multicultural Britain as long as people of colour and Muslim minorities acted according to the prevailing norms, set by whiteness and Christianity; values inaccessible to marginalized minorities. Moreover, tolerance was articulated in the appreciation of international food and 'exotic' cultures without necessarily engaging in more meaningful interactions with stigmatized others. They were accepted so long as they were kept at a safe distance, and contact was limited to commercial spaces. This approach to tolerance reinforced Poles' attempts to align themselves with the British majority. They reinforced this strategy by claiming that English people (i.e. white British) agreed with them, claiming that their English colleagues and friends expressed similar perceptions about minorities. The validation sought from white British people helped Poles position themselves as 'us', part of the legitimate (white) majority.

## Conclusion

Drawing on shared themes in my participants' everyday experiences, I demonstrated that lived diversities consist of contradictory practices towards cultural others, contingent upon spatial context and enacted within ongoing processes of learning to co-exist with others. My methodology allowed me to unravel the inconsistency and ambivalences entrenched in everyday encounters with others and demonstrate the practices as fragile and constantly changing. It also enabled me to explore the broader context of direct encounters with difference and conceptualize lived diversities as not only about observable interactions, but also about the individuals' perceptions of social contexts, driven by their personal biographies and ongoing learning about others. These, based on experiences with difference in Poland, mostly homogenous in terms of 'race' and

ethnicity, are re-shaped in a multicultural society, where Poles learn to co-exist with hitherto abstract others. But learning to live together goes beyond the direct encounters with others, which in case of Poles, are novel. I argue that encounters between individuals represent exchanges between peoples' socio-economic statuses.

Poles' practices with others reflect their perceptions of their ambivalent identity in British society as conditional citizens. Moving to Britain, they become the cultural Other, often stigmatized in public discourses. But due to their whiteness they manage to maintain an in-between position in the hierarchies of belonging. The negotiations of difference are specific to the British context which situates Polish people as racialized East Europeans and white Christian Europeans. Apart from the racial they also have legal and economic advantage over other migrants or minorities. As European citizens they can exercise certain rights, such as a permanent stay without a visa or work permit (although this may change after the Brexit negotiations) and, therefore, are in an advantageous position compared to newcomers from overseas. However, as East Europeans they tend to work in the low-skilled labour market sector, where they compete with other minorities and which undermines their skills and educational backgrounds.

The ambivalent status of racialized 'tolerant citizens' is reflected in their contradictory daily practices with others. On the one hand, they present themselves as being at ease with difference, in order to fit in with British societal norms. On the other, they stigmatize certain differences to prove their deservingness in British society. These practices occur within their interpretations of their own position as a guest, which implicitly challenges their belonging. The unpleasant encounters with white British people are often perceived as hostility towards their Polish identity. Thus, if a conflict arises that is seen as unjust, they often wonder if their nationality contributed to it. They are accepted as good guests as long as they act as 'good citizens'. Poles' everyday lived diversities manage the tensions entrenched in their conditional citizenship.

## 15 Conclusions

Conceptualizing living with difference poses two questions: lived by whom and what type of difference? Often, everyday lived diversities are analysed through the lens of the 'natives', how they manage to live in increasingly diversified societies transformed by global migration. Migrants' lived experiences offer an alternative story. The category of 'migrant' is constructed by the host country via racialized, gendered and classed discourses and immigration policies. Looking at how these identities play out in migrants' everyday practices with others allows us to go beyond the majority/minority dichotomy. It illuminates how diversity is learnt by newcomers who may be defined ambivalently as either belonging or not. The migrant approach therefore can enhance a deeper understanding of diversity as a political concept, shaped by a specific national context that reinforces certain hierarchies of belonging that they try to fit into. Migrants' everyday encounters with others say as much about their individual understandings of ethnic, racial, classed or religious difference as about the broader structural and ideological context that constructs those differences. Everyday lived diversities explored through the perspective of migrants unravel how nationally constructed boundaries define and reproduce hierarchies of peoples' deservingness in the host country.

I contribute to the small but growing literature concerned with Polish citizens settling in Britain. While Poles' high levels of migration since the European Enlargement in 2004 has gained a lot of academic attention, the issue of lived experiences of diversity is under-researched. Diversity is one of the aspects Polish migrants learn about, not through official government policies on social cohesion, but through their personal experiences of living together with others. These are shaped locally, in specific social settings, embedding broader national discourses that provide a context to how difference is constructed in Britain. Polish citizens have their own story to tell, which is shaped by the historical socio-economic and political context in Poland as well as by their identity as it is constructed in the British national context. Coming from a society in which the national identity is understood as somewhere between West and East, Poles develop understandings of hierarchies that prioritize the 'progressive and civilized' West over the 'backward and inferior' East. Being in-between, as some authors argue (Janion, 2011, Kania, 2009), creates an inferiority complex towards the admired Western Europe and a position of superiority in relation to the formerly colonized territories east of Poland. The high regard for the Western world is also reproduced in Poland's colonial and post-colonial thinking that racializes people of colour. Despite relatively little racial and ethnic diversity in Poland, and no history of modern colonialism, people who were colonized by Western nations carry the burden of inferiority in Polish discourses. All the learnings about difference in Poland are readjusted to the new context when Poles migrate to Britain. In



Britain, Poles' socio-economic status as low-skilled economic migrants, imagined as coming from the culturally and economically less developed East (Zarycki, 2010) continues to reinforce their ambivalent position within British society. My thesis explores how their ambivalent status as conditional citizens is maintained through everyday practices with others. On the one hand, Poles' whiteness, Christianity, and Europeaness, as well as discursively constructed identities as hard working and economic contributors to society (Fomina and Frelak, 2008, Parutis, 2011), privileges them over minorities and migrants of colour in Britain. On the other, imagined as East Europeans, they are racialized as the cultural 'Other' and treated with suspicion and concern, with pervasive discourses constructing them as a threat to both the British welfare system and the number of jobs available for British workers (Fitzgerald and Smoczynski, 2015, Spigelman, 2013). In Bridget Anderson's (2013) terms, they are tolerated citizens. As long as they are perceived as contributing to the British 'community of value' they are contingently accepted by the majority.

My research contributes to the scholarship on everyday lived diversities. With my thesis I aimed to understand how the process of learning to live with difference is shaped by Poles' conditional citizenship. Everyday encounters with difference tend to be explored by the literature on everyday multiculturalism (Neal et al., 2013, Noble, 2009, Wessendorf, 2014b, Wise and Velayutham, 2009), that emerged as a response to the proclaimed backlash against multiculturalism by politicians and media, and their accusations of lived segregations amongst ethnic groups (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010b). The scholarship aimed to provide a counter-argument to public claims of tensions amongst various cultural others and convincingly argued that people, in their everyday lives, rub along together regardless of cultural differences, questioning the importance of ethnic, racial, or religious differences in this context. Driven by the concept of conviviality, some scholars (Rzepnikowska, 2017, Wessendorf, 2014a, Wise, 2009, Jones et al., 2015, Wilson, 2011) elaborate on contact zones defined as specific (super)diverse settings where people encountering one another follow an ethic of indifference to difference and act in a civil manner, demonstrating that this ethic, whether in specific social settings or more broadly in (super)diverse neighbourhoods, drives people's behaviour and encourages them to respect one other's presence. The overall focus of the literature seems to be on positive practices, acknowledging racism but not elaborating on it, and situating racist practices at the margins of the lived diversities. When racism is studied, it appears to be investigated within specific micro contexts, rarely linked to the national structures that shape racialized hierarchies of belonging (Rzepnikowska, 2016b, Wise, 2016). In the quest to go beyond racial and ethnic categories in investigating everyday lives in diverse societies the literature, I argue, has shifted its focus on inequalities and social injustice reproduced in everyday lives and become rather descriptive. Unless it engages with the categories of difference marked as

undesirable in terms of racial, ethnic and religious identities (as in the case of Husband et al., 2014, Nayak, 2017, Back and Sinha, 2016), the scholarship risks neglecting the issues of racism and how such instances are connected to the broader structures of racialized hierarchies. This is the aspect of everyday lived diversities I contribute to with my research.

Taking into account my focus on the ambivalent status of Poles, I approached the positive and celebratory tone of the everyday multiculturalism literature with caution. I investigated everyday living together through the lens of Polish migrants by unpacking their practices beyond the performed civility in (super)diverse social settings, asking what happens if we follow individuals throughout their everyday routines and observe how they define difference and act upon it in various social settings. I then explored how their interactions are connected with 'the ethos of mixing' (Wessendorf, 2014b: 102) in public spaces. In order to investigate the complex practices people engage in, I developed a methodological approach that helped me capture the various strategies of negotiating difference. I wanted to explore the lived diversities beyond specific spatial contexts and conceptualize them outside of the framework of a geographically bounded (super)diverse ethos of living together successfully. Inspired by some traditional ethnographic accounts of everyday experiences with cultural others (Alexander, 1996, Alexander, 2000, Back, 1996), and 'go-along' interviews focusing on peoples' in-situ experiences and relations with specific spatial contexts (Anderson, 2004, Carpiano, 2009, Kusenbach, 2003, Parzer et al., 2017), I decided to apply a 'go-along observations' method. I therefore accompanied ten individuals throughout their daily routines and conducted participant observation with each of them across various social settings. This method helped me address complexities of everyday practices and, in a systematic way, unravelled the numerous strategies of living together, expressed by the same individuals. As a result of my methodological approach I gathered detailed and contextualized accounts of my participants lives, by observing their routines on a number of occasions and supporting the data gathered with two in-depth interviews. These detailed accounts of their everyday experiences highlighted the ambivalences in their practices with others. In order not to lose insight into the contextualised inconsistencies and contradictions of their everyday interactions, I organized my empirical chapters into ten small biographical stories – one for each of my participants. In every chapter I documented prevalent issues participants have in common, which emerged as a result of my fieldwork. Despite focusing on in-depth data of ten individuals, I draw larger conclusions about Polish migrants' practices with others by demonstrating the links between individuals' practices and their status, as it reflects the broader structural and ideological context. Despite being situated within the specific location of Bristol, I believe my research draws conclusions that contribute to broader discussions of belonging and integration.

Therefore, the main contributions of this research are:

- The methodological approach

I addressed the methodological bias in the everyday multiculturalism literature that tends to use participant observation in various (super)diverse settings. Instead, I accompanied individuals in different social contexts to elaborate on the intricacies of everyday encounters with difference. I was able to observe inconsistencies of their practices with others simply by following them throughout their routines. Moreover, I was able to understand what subjective meanings practices had for participants because I listened to their personal narratives. Thus, I could observe how their understandings and conceptualizations of difference changed across various social contexts. Often, their performed civility was later verified in different contexts via their narratives. These insights would not have been possible to gather through traditional participant observation in specific social settings. Therefore, this research makes a knowledgeable contribution to systematic analysis of the ambivalences and contradictions of various strategies of living with others and how they alter despite individual claims of specific dispositions. This research demonstrates that living with difference is about what we do, rather than how we are, with others.

- Conceptualising diversities beyond (super)diverse spaces

Most of the studies on everyday multiculturalism focus on (super)diverse spatial contexts. My method enabled me to observe the level of engagement of my participants with their (super)diverse neighbourhoods and reveal that some people's lives were not confined to their neighbourhoods but predominantly occurred outside them, when either working or socializing with others. Thus, the ethos of diverse neighbourhoods to rub along together is reviewed by demonstrating the different degrees in involvement in the local community, depending on people's family status, language competencies and subjective understandings of diversity.

Conceptualizing diversity beyond (super)diverse settings also helps to understand lived diversities in more homogenous sites. Bristol's neighbourhoods are racially, economically, and ethnically segregated. Some of my participants hardly ever spent time in diverse neighbourhoods, rarely encountering cultural difference beyond the British majority, and usually only in commercial contexts, i.e. during fleeting customer-type interactions in shops or on the markets. The absence of certain visible others, such as people of colour or Muslim minorities, in their immediate environments did not necessarily eliminate their presence in discourses, which often marked differences pejoratively. My data shows that, due to their whiteness, Europeaness, and Christianity, Poles often approach Muslim minorities and people of colour with a tolerant attitude expressed in

discourses that position the others as problematic guests. This category is juxtaposed with Poles' own position in the society as good guests. Hence, this thesis takes into account the unequal distribution of the city's diverse population and argues that diversity should be looked at as a broader political concept that reinforces racialized hierarchies, rather than merely spatial arrangements. Taking such a perspective, it is possible to engage with living with difference beyond (super)diverse neighbourhoods, and to explore how it affects people in various, including more homogenous, settings. This approach situates everyday diversities within the broader context of national hierarchies of belonging.

- Lived diversities through the lens of conditional citizenship

In my research I unravel how status plays out in everyday lives. I look at everyday practices with others through the lens of Poles' conditional citizenship. I define them as conditional citizens via the concepts of 'tolerated citizens' (Anderson, 2013), racial 'in-betweenness' that is 'not white enough' (Barrett and Roediger, 1997), and the perceived cultural and economic 'backwardness' of Easterners (Janion, 2011, Zarycki, 2010). Poles' legal status, Christianity, Europeaness and whiteness are constructed as an advantage and as a threat simultaneously. On the one hand, they are similar to the white British majority because of their racial and religious affiliations and legal status as EU citizens, while on the other they are racialised as a culturally and economically threatening Other. This ambivalent status is never fixed – Poles move on the spectrum of deservingness and are tolerated only as long as they are seen as following British values. I argue that this conditional citizenship is negotiated in mundane practices.

Poles seem to internalize their contingent relationship with citizenship and reinforce their conditional status through the host/guest discourse that reinforces their contingency. They define themselves as good guests and contrast this identity with other minorities and newcomers who are perceived by them as less deserving of British citizenship. Thus, Poles maintain their status through strategies of exclusion and inclusion. The former includes racializing others (defined as Muslim, Somali or black), while the latter requires performing civility towards diversity in public spaces, demonstrating a capability to follow the perceived British code of conduct. This performed ease of being amongst cultural others often reflects their tolerant attitude towards minorities of colour. As Hage (1998) noted the ability to tolerate reflects the unequal power relations over the tolerated subjects. Thus, in psycho-social terms, Poles' tolerant attitude may be interpreted as claims of power and positions them, at least in socio-psychological terms, as closer to the white British majority. This approach seems to reflect the British treatment of newcomers. After all, Poles are also 'tolerated citizens', contingently accepted only if they act in an expected manner. While it is

true that Poles transfer their ideas about difference from Poland, and I consider personal biographies to be an important factor in the shaping my participant's perceptions, this research focuses on lived diversities as the processes of learning about hierarchies in the British context, as acquired by Poles over time. Even those who claim to be racist towards black people do not act upon it, because they follow the perceived norms of behaviour in Britain. This does not necessarily mean that their perceptions will change as a result of co-existence with people of colour, but their practices towards them do. Poles want to do well as conditional citizens so will not risk acting as an outsider. Following the civility towards diversity is one of their strategies to fit in.

Brexit brings new challenges in terms of belonging and the place of minorities in Britain. We are yet to see how Poles will negotiate the post-Brexit vote context in which they are being racialized, but it is likely that they will want to strengthen their position via further practices of excluding the perceived outsiders. There has been an increase in British citizenship applications<sup>13</sup> and their political rights may help them make claims of belonging by strategies of exclusion. However, legal citizenship will not necessarily counteract their marginalization, so their contingent citizenship is likely to continue, perhaps with greater tensions engrained in its ambivalence under the Brexit pressures. Looking at lived diversities through the lens of status in post-Brexit Britain can shed light on complex hierarchies of deservingness people will negotiate in their everyday lives, and investigate to what extent British nationalism may threaten the so far invisible West Europeans, whose position in Britain has been less secure since the EU referendum<sup>14</sup>. With attention to people's status in exploring their everyday lived diversities, we can account for the structural context constructing the hierarchies of belonging through which individuals negotiate difference. I believe that this approach helps to investigate how racial ethnic and classed boundaries are reimagined and reproduced in everyday lives.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/14/sharp-rise-in-number-of-eu-nationals-applying-for-uk-citizenship>

<sup>14</sup> Reflected in the activities of the 3 million campaign that has advocated for the right of EU citizens to remain in Britain <https://www.the3million.org.uk/>

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